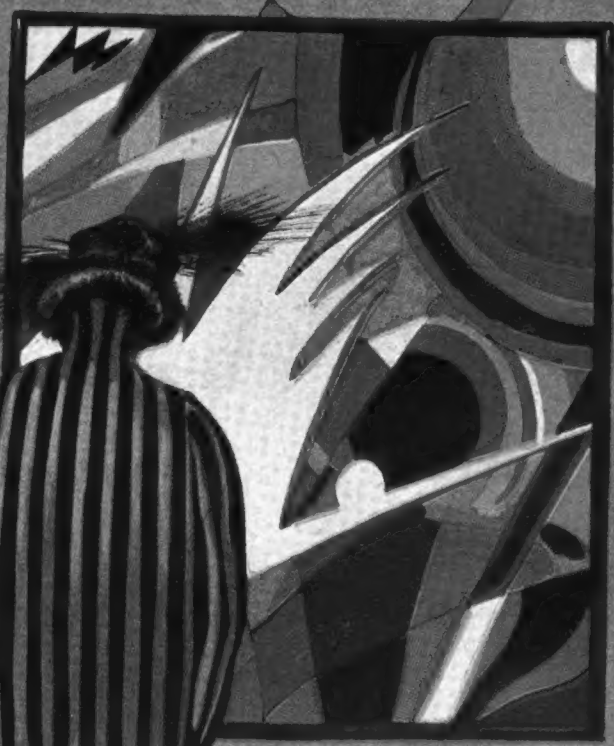


The SMART SET

Life: Literature:
Criticism: Wit:



Edited by
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN
and
H. L. MENCKEN

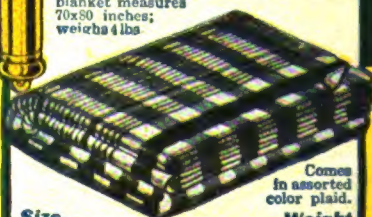


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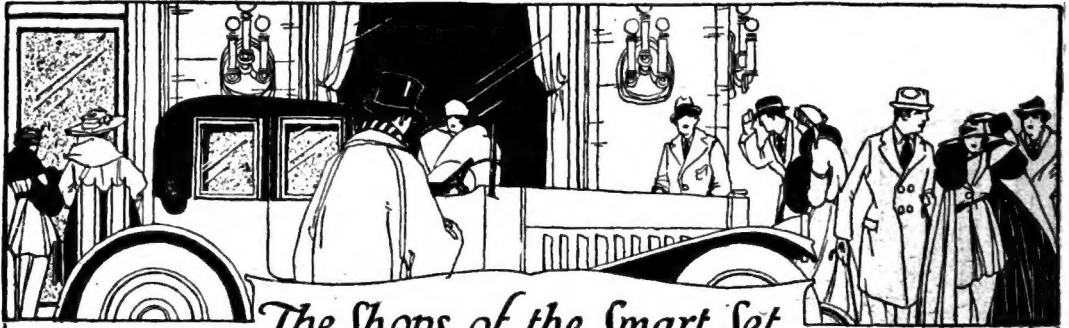
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Still Places

By Abigail Cresson

YOU, who are dear to my heart, forgive me
Touch me and kiss me and let me go;
For I have need of the still, wide places
When the south sun comes melting the snow.

Oh, let me go, for the four winds want me,
The tall trees beckon, and wild roads call,
And sheer, rough hills where the brush grows thickest
Showing no path for the feet at all.

I would be free for a day—how little—
Only a day, and you need not fear,
When the gray dusk creeps up from the river,
Look by our hearth—you will find me here.

The last year's leaves in my hair all tangled,
Briar torn clothing and loam stained hands,
And you may find in my eyes a strangeness
That only the swift wind understands.

That look will go as the night grows older;
Dear, you may tame me and keep me then . . .
I shall not grieve for the lonely places . . .
I shall not grieve—till Spring comes again.

The
SMART SET
The
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Onomatopoetically Speaking

By W. E. Sagmaster

IS there in all the English language, or indeed in any language, so euphonious, lovely, musical, and utterly alluring a word as the little monosyllable "sin"? Pronounce it slowly, giving the proper hiss to the "s," and drawing out the "n" in all its pure, tonal, organ-like beauty. Put alongside of it, for example, so harsh, ungainly, cacophonous, and generally awkward a word as "righteousness"—a word whose meaning, I venture to say, an unenlightened cannibal would be able to divine, if not immediately at least within a short space of time, without any further aid than the mere repetition of the word. But "sin"—ah, what a sublime word it is! How tremulously it vibrates in our hearts, how elfin-like it sweeps our soul's most dulcet strings! It is a word that lingers, that grows more endeared, more fascinating, more irresistible, with age — like good corn whiskey, ugly young girls, and French

cathedrals. There is something intrinsically and indefinably haunting about the word, some esoteric magic, some inscrutable loveliness that holds us ever. Many an idle hour have I spent, say in church, or perhaps with a volume of the "Idylls of the King" opened before me, murmuring this divine word over and over to myself, hypnotized with its limpid beauty, lulled into that half-dream state of ecstasy which only the highest æsthetic rapture can give.

I have a suspicion that the good old Anglo-Saxon fathers spent many a weary hour and burned many a midnight lamp before ultimately deciding upon this truly celestial word with which to designate the so-called shortcomings of what is known as the human race. "Synn," they called it—and frankly I prefer this spelling. It gives just the proper richness to the vowel, and indicates just the proper prolongation of the final consonant. Granting

that this difference is largely visual in the case of the vowel, certainly no one will claim that doubling the final consonant does not aid materially in bringing out the full, round, soul-stirring melody of the word. However, that is a minor point, as even with the modern spelling, the word remains absolutely unrivaled for its richness, its smoothness, its melody, its harmony, its scintillation, its overtones, its—but why go on? Why clutter the page with an unending list of the word's excellencies? Was there ever such a word? How it fires the blood; how it seeps through the spine; how it literally makes love

to the soul! A grand word! A marvelous word! A godlike word! Whence comes such another?

And what is the result? I refer you to the estimable societies, both local and national, for the prevention of what is called vice. . . . The human soul, even in the rough, is far too delicately and finely attuned to the lure of sound, far too ardently and passionately sympathetic to the siren-voice of "linked sweetness long drawn out" ever to be able to withstand the ineffable charm of so celestial a word as "sin"—or to tolerate the obnoxious discord of so infernal a word as "righteousness."



A Song of Ages

By Paul Tanaquil

*When I'm an old man
I'll sit by the fire,
Munching milk and bran,
With nothing to desire.*

*But now I am young
I must wander through the rain,
There's a song unsung
Fastened on my brain,*

*There's a road I must travel
To Ulchester,
Till my knots of tunes unravel
In a song for her,*

*I must run down a street
My senses all awirl,
Till I fall at the feet
Of a slim, white girl!*



A MAN makes the best of his opportunity. A woman makes a husband of hers.



Rocking Chairs

[A Complete Novelette]

By Catharine Brody

I

THE first and most important mail train came to Mt. Regis at that psychological moment in the middle of the morning when summer boarders sit on the hotel porch, swamped in the lethargy of digestion between the breakfast and dinner bells. The few women boarders—it was the very end of the season—at Mt. Regis' one hotel could not even make that brief curtsey to activity comprised in going for the mail, for the village store and postoffice, one of the prerogatives of the innkeeper, rested snugly against the side of the hotel.

From the porch the women could watch Miss Keyes, who took care of it, arranging cigarettes and candy with her usual stubborn concentration. Around a bend in the road, a quarter of a mile way, they could see the station hunched by the side of the railroad tracks, opposite it the lake winking a blue eye through trees and between cottages, round and about the hills of the Adirondacks stooping, dazed with sunshine, over brief patches of cultivated land. But it is characteristic of summer pursuers of nature that, having paid for the privilege of gazing thereon, the attention of the boarders should have been focused solely on Miss Keyes, sorting, checking, marking, laying aside, putting together.

"Wouldn't you think she'd take a rest—sometimes?" said Mrs. Blake to her crony, Mrs. Kohler. Both had been coming to Mt. Regis for years.

"She never has an idle moment," replied Mrs. Kohler sonorously, as befitted two hundred pounds of good housekeeping and ready sentiment.

"If she isn't tending store, she's checking stock, and if she isn't handing out mail, she's minding Mrs. Lindemuller's children. She never even has time to say good-morning," sniffed the brisk old Miss Muller, the hotel's one permanent resident, who had seen Mt. Regis grow up and criticized it accordingly.

"It must be dreadful living here, working here all the time." It was Mrs. Burke again.

"Yes, well, I guess she doesn't mind it," droned Mrs. Kohler, "used to it. I always say if they had any go, they'd get out."

"And a girl like that, too, without any ties. She's just wasting her life."

"Not very popular here with the townspeople, is she?" eagerly spoke up the lady who had come to Mt. Regis for the first time and was busy gathering past sheaves of gossip.

"No," said Mrs. Kohler. "They think, Mrs. Lindemuller was telling me, since her sister left, she's been a little off."

"Off nothing," interpolated Miss Muller, "though she's had enough to drive her crazy. As for her sister, Mary ought to be glad to get rid of her, after all she did for her—"

"Miss Muller always stands up for Mary Keyes," laughed the good natured Mrs. Kohler.

"Why, what's she done?" The insatiable lady was alive at once.

"Well, nothing, exactly. You see, she had a sister who—"

Mrs. Burke stepped on Mrs. Kohler's foot; "Sh"—as Miss Keyes went past the porch to the decrepit Ford, perpetually in waiting before the hotel. She was going to fetch the mail. She had heard nothing, yet she looked at the four women on the porch, rocking in sudden silence, with foreboding. So people still talked about her.

The four women gave her an apprehensive smile and nod. To anyone else they would have called greetings, but there was something about Miss Keyes that forbade casual intimacy. They did not know how she longed to smile affably, carefree and indifferent with them like any ordinary human being, like anybody else in town. But she could only manage a stiff bend of her stubborn neck, a bend that against her will took cognizance of their gossip and scorned them for it.

The women on the porch sniffed behind her back and glanced at each other.

"Did you ever see such a stuck-up?" said Mrs. Kohler, at once defensive.

Then, as Mary Keyes could see from the road, all the rocking-chairs were hitched to form a group and as she had foreseen, once more all that was known of her life was torn into shreds, masticated voraciously, and at last disgorged by each woman in a mouthful of corroding comment.

II

A LETTER had come for Miss Mary Keyes in the afternoon mail. She had been expecting it for weeks, but now that it was here she put it by unopened. It seemed a waste of effort to read it since, knowing Irma, she could guess that the letter would be a paler copy of the first one. It would begin, "Dear Sister Mary," and would end, "Your loving sister, Irma." It would tell her that "we are all well and happy." It would add something about Rockville, Ohio, being "nice" and the

house being "nice" and the neighbors being "nice." Everybody and everything were always nice to Irma. If they weren't, she ignored them as of no account.

So she laid the letter by till dinner-time, till after the last mail, and after the three little Lindemüllers had been stuffed into their one bed. When the letter could be put off no longer, she found that she had been right about its contents, except for one blotted and much-erased paragraph at the end.

"I know you haven't heard from me in a long time," Mary Keyes read, "and I would write more, but Bob is so mad at you, and he doesn't like me to. I feel terrible about it, but what can I do? I don't think I should go against my husband, so this will explain why you won't hear from me. Don't worry about me. I'm all right. Bob is real fond of baby. Good-bye and good luck. Irma."

So that was finished. She had no excuse even for indignation. This was no more than she had expected. Leaning on her window-sill, she felt nothing but an all-embracing contempt for any scheme of things which could swallow such injustice and survive. She had done her duty, she had hugged the right, she would have gone hugging the right to her grave. And what had happened? The storm had taken its toll of her unflinchingly only with a madder glee.

From her window spread the sky, a frozen battlefield of color. The phonograph sounded, far in the recesses of the house, yearning over a refrain that was like an oversweet distillation of the commonest and most unforgettable experiences, of the pain and romance of youth and love and all things not yet brought to the eternal prosaic conclusion. Once such a sky would have set her head throbbing, her heart longing. Once such a refrain would have penetrated a crust of her inward self and set unknown shimmering particles strangely free, released them into strange, solemn, rhythmic, rainbow-colored movement. Now these things

meant only a hot night spent in piecing together the life she might have had, if she had done so and so, and failed to do the other thing, if she had been strong enough, for instance, to wrench herself away from Irma.

III

SOMEHOW, whenever Mary Keyes tried to think coherently of Irma, tried to reason her out, to determine just how wrong she was, she always smiled grimly at that very early incident of the soup. Perhaps this marked the first time Irma had ever begun to be a personality to her sister, a personality to be startled at, to puzzle over, to admire unwillingly, but to imitate only against stringent instincts.

Irma was a tiny, pretty child of six at the time, with precocious, bright, blue eyes. Mary was thirteen, indefinite-featured, obedient. Mrs. Keyes washed for the summer boarders, helped at the hotel, scrubbed for the surrounding countryside, whenever one of the well-to-do would send a car for her. As for Mr. Keyes, he had hired out to the farmers, until one day life grew too monotonous and Mr. Keyes took to his heels and was heard of no more. The Keyes were the one indigent family in a countryside where everybody had a savings bank account and was as good as everybody else and a great deal better than the summer boarders. The Keyes were isolated, as the one exception.

Even the summer boarders patronized them. They patted Irma on the head and called her "such a pretty child. What a shame she's kept so filthy!" They spoke of Mary as "that poor little girl who delivers the washing."

In the summer, Mrs. Keyes kept her back to the washboard, so to speak, and Mary was her mother's maid-of-all-work, while Irma revelled in lollypops and bent her head ingratiatingly for pats. In winter, Mrs. Keyes had leisure to bring up her children. That meant to wash them, to teach them

their prayers, to make them "behave."

They were eating supper one winter night. Mrs. Keyes always insisted on her children's absorbing a generous amount of soup. It was "good for them." Therefore, both Mary and Irma hated soup. That evening it happened to be unusually sloppy and acrid.

Mary made one or two dabs at her plate, then pushed it away as inconspicuously as possible.

"Finish your soup," said Mrs. Keyes sharply.

"I don't want it," muttered Mary.

"Don't want it? What's the matter with it?"

"I don't like it," said Mary, looking her mother straight in the eye as if that finished the subject. She had that unconscious, fixed way of speaking sometimes which invariably made people want to reopen the subject.

"You *don't*? You ought to be glad to have soup. If I can work my fingers to the bone to make it for you, I guess you can eat it, Miss. Eat your soup."

A naturally obedient child, Mary might have gulped down the soup without further ado, if it hadn't been for Irma's presence. Her pride would not allow her to retreat before an onlooker. So she said nothing and held her ground.

Mrs. Keyes took her by the shoulders and shoved her into the darkest corner of the kitchen.

"You'll just stand there, Miss, till you *do* eat your soup. When I tell you to do a thing, I'll learn you to do it, if you like or not."

So Mary stood. Irma had been watching with fascinated eyes. As Mrs. Keyes sat down again and turned to Irma, Mary saw the child make a subtle motion of her hand and send her own plate of soup, also untouched, over her dress and to the floor. Immediately she set up a great howl.

"Ow, the soup burned Irma, ow-ow-w!"

Mrs. Keyes ran to undress her, to soothe her, to promise her a doughnut if she would "hush up" and "be good."

Mary stood in her corner. The soup had not been hot. She saw Irma being kissed and caressed and finally put down at table again, redressed, to eat the rest of the meal. Still Mary stood. Supper finished, Irma came out of the pantry with a doughnut, and ate it in front of Mary, peering at her sister curiously out of the already mocking blue eyes.

"Mary is a bad girl," she sang, moving to her music, "Irma is a good girl."

"Yes, dearie, Irma is a good girl," encouraged her mother.

Still, Mary would not give up. Her eyes were hot with a childish sense of injury, which she could even trace in a way. Mary would not eat her soup because she didn't like it. Therefore, she had to stand in a dark corner. Irma couldn't eat soup, because she had spilled it—on purpose (but even if she were mean enough to "tell on" Irma, Mary knew she wouldn't be believed), therefore Irma got a doughnut and was a good girl. She, Mary, would never yield to such unfairness.

Finally, when her mother began to put out the lights for the night, Mary capitulated. With a great sob of balked pride, she swallowed the obnoxious soup—her mother standing over her inexorably to the last drop. And she made up her mind to hate Irma forever.

But in the morning, Irma, seeing her sister once more restored to favor, saved her breakfast doughnut and slipped it into Mary's hand afterwards, with pleading eyes. Mary was softened. Irma was only a baby, after all, only six. She couldn't be expected to understand what was fair. Her mother should be blamed, not Irma. And wasn't it unselfish and pathetic of such a baby to offer her a doughnut as a peace-gift? So Mary returned the doughnut, hugged her little sister and forgot. It came back to her thoughts only after many seemingly unallied circumstances had given the soup incident significance as her first rending premonition of what Irma might be. How could she ever have forgotten?

IV

BUT she had forgotten. An interval of years up to the time of her mother's death was tangled up in soft, silky intangible skeins of Irma's proximity,—making over cast-offs into fresh, fluffy clothes for Irma, watching her flirt away with one of the farmer's boys, to go skating, listening to her pert, high voice in self-conscious confidences, marveling especially at her tremendous ease with men, with whom Mary was either scornful or shy. With one sideward gleam of her eye, one alluring lift of her lips, Irma placed herself at once on a plane above masculinity, which from its coarser, lower ground besought her favors. A man could not be in her presence for a second before becoming conscious that she had highly valued bounties to confer—veiled smiles, secret warmth from big blue eyes, deep kisses in dark woods.

While Irma laughed and flashed her eyes, Mary worked and listened. Apart from a deep-rooted, almost maternally protective love for her pretty, soft, wheedling younger sister, Mary viewed Irma as an enchanting spectacle, and as a spectacle Irma had for her as fearful a charm as that of a snake for a bird.

At Mrs. Keyes' death, therefore, Mary felt it no hardship to help the Lindemullers who owned the hotel and continued to cook and care for Irma. She was only thankful that Irma would stay, for her sister was really her one link with the town, with romance, with joy, with life itself. When Irma at seventeen grew pettish and moped and longed for excitement, Mary felt as if the sun had retired behind a gray veil, forever, leaving her in a purgatorial world, neither light nor dark, neither hot nor cold. She coaxed Irma with new foods, made her new clothes, tried to maroon her in the shallows with little tempting remarks about her conquests, how Yale Dawson had confided that he was "crazy about her," how this man or that would marry her in a second, how she could marry a

round half-dozen of men, for that matter—farmers, railroad workers, summer hotel keepers, in the neighborhood. To all of which, Irma turned an impatient shoulder, emphasized by a petulant foot. At last it was out. Irma had grown sick of this one-horse town, of these one-horse men. She wanted to go to Syracuse.

"If you'll only help me along a little, I can pay for a course in a real good secretarial school at night and get a job in the daytime. It won't cost much. And when I get a real good job, you could come and live with me, Mary. Won't that be fine? Mary, darling, please, I'll never ask anything more of you."

Next to her desire to see her sister well provided for, Mary would have liked to see her educated. She had had dreams of Irma as the town teacher, pretty and neat and "refined," and a little superior to the people who had once patronized the Keyes with old clothes. Since Irma had shown no aptitude for school, work in an office was the next best thing. She had to agree with her sister that marrying any old country gawk and wearing oneself out with cooking and cleaning for a husband and children and summer boarders and a savings bank account, was not an enviable destiny for the fragrant Irma. In the city there would be nice, up and coming young fellows like those who spent their summer vacations in Mt. Regis, in sport clothes, with tennis racquets. She gave Irma the slim savings that Mrs. Keyes had left jointly to the two girls, augmented it by some hoarded contributions of her own, and, burying her loneliness with a Spartan fervor, she sent Irma off.

V

THE departure of Irma brought her a short, gay interval of youth. How merry she had been that summer! How light her head used to feel of mornings! It seemed to float on her shoulders like a feather teased by the wind, flecked with the sunshine. She lived in the aura

of a faint astonishment. Mr. Jenkins, the station agent, whom she had hardly noticed before, actually seemed to be in love with her.

At first she saw his eyes follow and appraise her. He was a short, stubby man of forty, with a rough, brown, knocked-about face and bold eyes. He had been to sea as a boy, she had heard. He kept a cigar, lit or unlit in the corner of his mouth and when she came for the mail he stared at her hard and long, with eyes puckered slyly. When he did this, he seemed to be touching all the shy and sore and concealed bits of her soul with exploring fingers that sometimes pressed unexpectedly and made her wince and flush. Then he would smile with a jocose understanding, roll the cigar round and round in his mouth and spit with deliberation. Sometimes he merely winked, at which she bridled. But oftener he would come from behind his enclosed desk and straddle in front of her, eyeing her and making feints at gallantry. He helped her lift the mail bags to the Ford, brushing her thigh or her shoulder with a hard impact of heavy masculinity.

Before dinner, he would stroll in the store from the hotel, where he boarded and lean over her counter, with an effect of having his thumbs thrust in his armpits, smoking expansively.

"How's the gal?" he would say, "How about a little walk to get up an appetite, eh? How about it?"

She would lock up and they would saunter up the road to the lake. As soon as they reached the hushed, wooded branch of the path out of sight of the hotel, he would move closer, fixing his eyes upon her and slip his hand under her arm, fingering the fleshy part. Then he would squeeze her arm, tightly, once or twice, breathing hard and regarding her as if they had an illicit understanding. They did not speak. The woods creaked and sighed and rustled about them, like a legion of green things on a stealthy march. The sky grew pale and cool, as if withdrawing in outraged modesty from the inflamed sun.

"I bet you're a grand cook," he remarked with another pressure of her arm.

Very casually, prepared for retreat in the event of indignation, his arm slipped about her waist. He jerked her close, held her stealthily, then, hearing a faint echo of laughter from the end of the path, he released her abruptly. They turned and walked out of the woods. He had never kissed her. When they mounted the steps to the hotel, the summer boarders smiled and nodded to one another. Everybody in town began to know her as Mr. Jenkins' "girl."

She emerged from such encounters weak and strangely relaxed and a little frightened without being at all aware of what she was afraid of. She was awakening very gradually to the world in which Irma had so long lived. Thoughts, sounds, senses that stole into her mind and that she used to fence sedulously off, with a placard, "For Irma only," rebelled behind their pickets and overflowed in a panting procession. In her room at nights she listened with a warm dreaminess to the stream of sentimentally sensuous music that oozed from the parlor. She tried to write to Irma about it, filling pages with guarded description, in a note of timorous pride. "See," ran the undercurrent to her letters, "I am not as attractive as my sister, of course, but still, somebody cares even for me."

Irma's answers were a disappointment. She generally dismissed her sister's confidences with a flick of indifference, if not of mild disdain. She seemed to imply that Mary was still a novice and an innocent, while she, Irma, the younger, had access to recondite rites in the inner temple. Her amorous adventures had far more thrilling and more wicked objectives and were fraught with a thousand delicious and daring subtleties of which Mary could catch only vague meanings from a wistful distance. She recounted these adventures largely, with the assurance of an intimate of Aphrodite, thrusting her sister farther and farther away from

the sacred gates. Men in Syracuse were plunged in distraction or suspended to ecstasy by a mere smile from Irma. Only one man, and he middle-aged and unmannered, had shown the slightest hint of desire for Mary.

"Hasn't that Jenkins asked you to marry him yet," Irma once asked in a careless postscript. She had underlined the "yet" with tolerant scorn. Mary answered half in humility, half in a newborn resentment that "she hadn't given him a chance to speak of marriage—yet."

Mr. Jenkins never asked her to marry him. In late autumn, the hideous, shivering night when Irma suddenly stepped off the mail train, he came for the last time to ask Mary to walk down the road with him. Irma had been sobbing on Mary's knees for a half hour. They felt hot, weak, and drenched. The wind roared in through the half-open door of the shop, and lashed wisps of her hair into her eyes, aggravating their watery redness. In her colorless, ragged-sleeved sweater, her body was hunched under a new weight.

"No, I'm busy, Mr. Jenkins," she mumbled from behind the cash register. She did not want to come out and face him. He hung about for a moment in a resentful way, and when she looked again he had gone.

She saw him only a few times after that. He treated her coolly, abstractedly, but she was then beyond caring. Her one spurt of youth in a sunny summer of even days as bright as yellow, and dreamy nights, soft as velvet, had been snuffed out, never to be relit.

VI

THEY were riding on the train to New York, Irma and Mary. A premature snow had fallen the day before, and the sky was of an unhealthy, thick gray, like a coated tongue. All day long, Mary had sat with her eyes concentrated out of the window, not turning to look at Irma even when she had to soothe her. All afternoon, she had watched the lower, more homely moun-

tains along the Hudson, a procession of white, snowed-under hills, with drab cottages squatting along the tops, under a sky spotted here and there with gradually fading blue. Now they were beyond Albany, and the sky, relenting toward the irrevocable night, became a series of dim, gold and silver pools, separated by ridges of lead. It was an unradiant sky, but gentle, relaxed, quiescent to its destiny. It stooped out of its superior resignation pityingly toward the bare earth which lay below like a worn-out life, racked by a dry wind, as harsh as a virago's voice, and refused to be comforted.

The train stopped at a small town of huddled gray and brown houses, with pimples of color—a lurid yellow, a putrid red, a sickly green, nothing natural, nothing vivid. The sun had now melted its stray gold into a single length of gauzy yellow, banding the west. Mary sat and gazed at the town, an ugly town, but a town of homes with warm fires, sheltering on winter nights. Her heart contracted again and again as, while the train waited, lights flickered at shadowy windows and then, the blinds being lowered, glowed faintly out of their seclusion and comfort.

The train moved on, out of town into more fields and hills and woods. The country weighed on her, with its hard wind, its trees like wisps of a slattern's hair, earth as white as a shroud, sky as leaden as a coffin, with its band of weird yellow, like the light of candles about a deathbed. An oppression compounded partly of brooding, partly of fear came with the dull, resistless evening cold and pressed heavily on her mind with an almost physical pressure. Her head ached with it. She drew up her feet and huddled together in her seat. Irma, beside her, was plucking at her coat.

"What are you looking at? Can't you talk to me? Mary, those two old cats across the aisle have been staring at me all along. You said no one could tell."

"Well, they can't."

"That's what *you* say. Oh, of

course, it doesn't matter to you. It's nothing to you. Oh, I feel so terrible! I wish I were dead."

Then for the hundredth time: "Irma, *why* did you do it? How could you do it?"

"Oh, you make me sick. You don't know *anything*. Why did I do it? You'd have done the same—if you had the chance."

"Don't talk like that."

"I'll talk anyway I like. Maybe you want to go back on me too. You can leave me right here. I don't care. I'll go on the streets. I should worry. It'll be all the same to you, I suppose."

"Irma, don't. I'll always stay with you."

"I'm so sick. Won't we ever get to New York? This damn train's so slow. I'm not going to stand it that's all. I know I can do something. Listen, Mary, will you promise to go with me—in New York?"

Again for the hundredth time, rigidly: "No, Irma, I won't. I'll do anything for you but that."

"It's all your fault—everything I have to go through. Oh, you don't care, you don't have to suffer. I won't stand it. I tell you. . . ."

"Hush, Irma, don't talk so loud. They'll hear you."

Mary longed to put her arm about her sister, enfold her with reassuring protection, to express to her the enduring love she was prepared to give. But people might look at them curiously. She didn't dare. The two girls sat taut. The train swooped in and out of tunnels, flashed its lighted windows defiantly through darkness, traversing its appointed route to its appointed destination for all the world like a graphic illustration of a human life trailing through the universe. Eventually the train stumbled into the heterogeneous brilliance of Grand Central

VII

OF New York Mary could never remember anything clearly except a jumble of lights, people and buildings,

bound together with the steel girdles of the traction lines, as she saw it for the first time, and an unbearable drudging noise as she thought of it at the last. In between, it was a double room, forever damp and cold, and obscurely nauseating, like a leaky nose, with Irma always lying in the bed, covered with a blanket, whimpering over a cheap paper or magazine, and chewing candy. Or it was the block of close, brown stoop houses, each hiding its secrets from the other, in which they lived. Or it was the grocery store around the corner, where she bought skimpily of an impersonally contemptuous salesman. Or, it was the still more impersonal ward, where, in a row of limp women, Irma lay after her baby had been born.

Mary had a feeling of satisfaction when she came to the ward. It would have been so eminently wrong to bear an illegitimate child in an atmosphere of anticipation and contented preparation. In being humiliated and uncomfortable, Mary thought that Irma paid in part for her sin and tempered with pity the wrath of a righteous God. Besides all the women in the ward had grown accustomed to the business of bearing children and all the nurses and doctors to their business of ushering them in. Irma and her carefully concocted story and her meretricious wedding ring were matters of indifference to the world, which was a thing for gratitude.

It would have meant plunging through a fire of shame at Mt. Regis. In New York, the birth of the baby meant only floundering through ashes of suffering, self-commiseration, fear for the future. It had been Mary's idea to come to New York immediately. Irma had no ideas except that it would "kill her" to stay at Mt. Regis, or to go back to Syracuse. She had no regret, only a whining pity for herself, mixed up with hatred of the man. She could not even explain why she had succumbed to him. An itinerant young man with patience enough to devote himself to her seduction and cynicism enough to appeal to her cupidity for

clothes, dinners, good times, ease that would cost her nothing, a moment of lust and self-confidence, some weeks of tentative anxiety, then flight to her sister. She did not believe the name he had given her was his real name, and he had always been vague about his work and his home. He had simply left their hotel one day and taken a train somewhere and disappeared as completely as a pebble under water, like her father.

For some reason, Irma began to blame her father and to connect him with her misfortune. How could anyone wonder at her when she had never really had a mother, a father, or a home, she sobbed to Mary. Parents, miserable, thoughtless parents! Meanwhile, she hated the thought of her child.

Her sister dreaded it. Yet, in spite of hate and dread, in the spring, the baby insisted on being born, a normal, squalling little girl. They didn't care to expend any imagination on the infant, so they called her Bessie after their mother.

It had seemed to Mary as if the birth of the baby was the culmination of the cloud of disaster in which she and Irma had lived. The child should have been ushered in with peals of thunder and lightning and then the skies, relieved, should have become steady if not serene. But the days before the child's birth were of the same blandness, as if the world had paused to ruminate over past and happy tendernesses, and had no time for present turmoil, while after its birth, Mary's life began to be filled with petty turbulences. Irma fretted. She was sallow, thin, hysterical. She blamed it all on the baby, though it was Mary who tended it and got up to rock it in the middle of the night. The difficulty that harassed them most, however, was their pitiful finances. The jewelry Irma had extracted from her lover and had brought with her had trickled away long ago. They had managed to sell their old house, but even that money diminished visibly every week.

There was a passage of acrid backbiting on Irma's part, ending in wrathful tears, when Mary suggested that she might hire out as a cook or a housemaid, the only occupations she was fitted for. Irma did not object to the social degradation, Mary had no social standing or duty as far as she was concerned, except to care for her. She balked at the care of the room and the baby that would devolve on her if Mary left, and on her subsequent solitariness.

"I won't even be able to go downstairs and take a walk," she moaned.

Irma was queerly ashamed of the baby, as if it had been deformed or peculiar. She ignored it as much as possible. When they went out, Mary always carried it. Left to herself, Irma would never have had enough courage to kill it, but she would have callously, in every furtive way, have stifled its life.

Mary's ceaseless, petty worry was followed by a period of apathy. She did not even attempt to foreshadow what might happen to them. Every morning, she rose at seven, got breakfast, and bathed the baby, cleaned, dressed, fetched and carried for Irma, got lunch, cared for the baby, went for a walk, got dinner, put the baby to bed, listened to a monologue from Irma, went to bed, and lay all night under a meagre share of the bedclothes, scarcely moving lest she should disturb Irma.

For a time after the baby's birth, Irma had seemed to lose all her prettiness. She grew thin, bones jutted at all angles from under her flabby skin. Her face, once all soft eeriness, set vividly before one's attention by her heavy, blue eyes, acting a sort of exclamation point, had dark yellow shadows under the eyes and about the nose. Her skin was dry, sallow; her mouth pursed peevishly. She looked unhealthy with dissipation, surly.

Irma was the last to see this, but when she complained about looking old and tired, Mary perjured herself with assuring compliments. She was then wholly abandoned in devotion to her sister, heart, soul, mind and body, at

her sister's service. This devotion and her care of the baby, instead of wearing her out, improved her. It gave her undistinguished face a rather eager, rosy, anxious-to-please look. People thought, as she held the baby, that she was a young matron, still not quite habituated to her new life. Passersby glanced at her in a pleasant, quizzical way, not seeing Irma at all.

When the baby was about four months, however, Irma, by dint of rest and absorption in herself, came out of her lethargy refreshed. She was still thin, but that accentuated her selfishness and the slender, conscious sensualism of her body. Once more she dressed coquettishly and lifted speculative eyes to every passing man. Automatically, Mary fell in place below her, no longer indispensable, but subsidiary, not an equal, but an inconsequential companion.

Once again Mary shrank together beside her sister, and her face glossed over with a hopeless, self-contained look, like a book that no one ever troubles to open. When she walked with her sister now, she looked into people's eyes and waited with a vague, immediately stifled pang of jealousy to see the eyes skip her and pause at Irma. She was weary, she was unnecessary. She was like an anchor, plumbing at random a bottomless ocean, in New York. She longed for the only harbor where she had found peaceful mooring. Her object accomplished, she wanted with a choking desperation to go home.

VIII

IN late August, with Bessie in her arms, she was being helped off the train at Mt. Regis by a young man whose skin and hair were of such a dry yellow that he looked as if he had been preserved in sand for a long time. She had never seen him before, though he wore a pencil behind his ear and a worried, possessive attitude toward the whole station. However, in her delight and peace at being home, on the old cracked boards of the waiting room

with the road and woods back of it, and in front, the railroad track, more road and more woods, the sparkle of the lake and the cottages sprawling and straggling along the horizon, he had no room for curiosity. She had dared to vision the impossible, and behold, the impossible had become the only possibility.

It had been hot in the city with a heat that wilted and seeped out energy into drops of sweat. It had been stifling in the train into which weary vacationists clambered all day long, mopping their foreheads and dreaming of the cool Adirondack lakes. Mt. Regis was hot too, but with a blazing, buoyant heat that lighted her body like a torch and bore it on high to add its tiny warmth to the great dazzling bonfire that was the sun. Even the baby reacted agreeably and crooned and kicked cheerfully to itself as Mary carried her up the road. Nothing had changed, Mary thought, as she saw that Mrs. Dilly still lay in her hammock outside of the cottage nearest to the station, while her small grandson played in the grass beside her. Mary nodded and smiled to her in gratitude for her stationariness, without bringing anything but a curious stare from the other woman.

She walked on, less assured, wondering to herself, "Why, I suppose she didn't recognize me." But it was strange. Mrs. Dilly had grown up and borne children and married them off in Mt. Regis. She was as much a part of the town as the hills and she had known Mary from birth.

"Can I have changed so much?" Mary pondered.

The more she thought and the farther she walked up the road, the smaller and shallower grew the ocean of happiness that had welled up in her, until soon it was nothing but a disturbed and muddy pool, threatening at any minute to become wholly dried up.

Further to reassure herself she shifted the baby and took Mrs. Lindemuller's letter from her purse. It had a sound of complacent kindness, with a vein of curiosity underneath. On the

surface, however, Mrs. Lindemuller accepted all explanations and offered all encouragement. It was only natural that the hotel-keeper's wife, habituated to a life of neighborly inquisitiveness, should want to inquire, but the letter seemed to recognize, albeit ruefully, Mary's right to withhold.

Mary was further heartened by the sight of Mrs. Lindemuller, standing on the hotel porch and peering down the road. She came part way down the steps to greet Mary, grabbed her by the shoulder and shook her playfully.

"So you're home again, Mary," she exclaimed with large graciousness.

Then, with an eager look that probed the baby to its skin, "So that's the baby. Poor little thing!"

"Yes."

"Isn't it funny? I never heard of your cousin in New York at all."

"She was one of father's people, I wrote you," said Mary.

"I remember, Mary. I was dumfounded. The poor little orphan. Such nice brown eyes, just like yours, Mary. There, give her to me. So you're back. Well, I must say I'm glad. We had that Finchley girl from Malone—and of all the stupid . . . ! Come and see Mr. Lindemuller. And how's Irma?"

"Very well, thank you. She found a good job, I wrote you."

"Yes, I remember," she rattled. "There's been a lot of change. You seemed to start the ball rolling, Mary. Did you know we have a new station agent—a Mr. Powers? That drunken Jenkins has gone, and I say, thank the Lord. Oh, but you and him used to go around together, didn't you?"

"No, not much," replied Mary absently. Mr. Jenkins was a ghost to her now. She could hardly visualize his face.

"Well, he left the week after you did," said Mrs. Lindemuller. She kept joggling the baby, holding her face away from Mary. "You never hear from him, do you?"

"Oh, no."

"You're well rid of him," said the older woman with an obscure change of

tone. "Don't you mind what people say. You wouldn't want to have any more to do with a bum like that. He took in a lot of people around here."

"I don't—I haven't—I didn't know Mr. Jenkins hardly," remonstrated Mary with impatience. She hated talking to Mrs. Lindemuller, whom she could feel grasping acutely at straws all the while.

"No? You used to go walking with him every night," offered the older woman coolly.

Then repenting, she entreated. "Did you see the new agent? All the girls are after him. I must say he's a nice young man, too."

By this time they had reached the kitchen and Mr. Lindemuller who acted as chef during the summer, "helloed" at Mary jocularly, trailing a greasy hand down her arm.

"My, you look fine, Mary!" he cried. "New York must've agreed with you, heh. That the baby?"

"Yes."

"Funny about your cousin. I never heard your pop talk about any relations down there."

"We didn't know her hardly," murmured Mary.

"So that's why you run off so sudden? We was wondering—well, had a good time in New York, didn't you, Mary?"

The two Lindemullers burst out laughing. Mary looked from one to the other surprised. She had never known them so hilarious. What funny people they were anyhow, she mused from a high distance above them. But kind. She should be grateful to them.

"I fixed up your room for you. I guess you'll want the baby in your bed. Yes, I was that way with my first, only Jack made me get a cradle. But I guess it's different with you."

The two Lindemullers winked at each other. They seemed to include Mary by a sudden right into their domestic reticences, to reach out sweaty hands and jerk her into their circle sardonically, even as she retreated. She was obscurely frightened.

They left her alone in her room at
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last with the baby. She spent the time until supper in washing and redressing Bessie, and then she lay down for a nap with the baby cuddled in her arms. It was so Mrs. Lindemuller found them after she had rung the bell, and she felt wholly magnanimous toward Mary out of her married superiority.

IX

It made a touching addition to her tale, and Mrs. Lindemuller, a born storyteller with the artist's intuitive grasping at patches of detail, did not hesitate to appropriate it. She whispered to her privileged boarder her version, glued with sentiment as heavy as molasses. With moral comments it passed on to the townspeople, and finally it circled the circle and so reached Mary.

She heard remarks about the baby's eyes: "Brown like yours, Mary. Nobody in your family but you had brown eyes." Once Mrs. Lindemuller took her aside and showed her a casual postal card from Mr. Jenkins written to Mr. Lindemuller from Chicago.

"Now I wouldn't advise you to get hold of him for your own sake," she cautioned clandestinely. "But you oughta think of the baby. Jack would be glad to find out for you. We always stand by you, just remember, Mary."

"But what—why should I want to get hold of Mr. Jenkins? What has he got to do with me or the baby? She's my cousin's child in New York that died all of a sudden—I wrote you. . . ."

Mrs. Lindemuller was compassion personified. "Never mind, I know just how it was. Sometimes it happens with girls, especially with girls that ain't got mothers to look after them and keep them strict. I wouldn't say a word against you."

"Mrs. Lindemuller, will you please stop talking to me that way? What do you mean by daring to say that I—I—why, I never—you know me."

"Don't take on that tone with me, Mary," continued Mrs. Lindemuller with conviction. "You must think I

haven't got a brain in my head. A cousin nobody ever heard of dying in New York and leaving you a baby—and you had to stay and nurse her that long, yes, I guess! And Mr. Jenkins going away so sudden. And the baby with brown eyes just like yours. You can't tell me. Things don't happen like that. I don't say a word against you, I always stand up for you, but you don't have to go telling *me* stories."

Mary was like a wild animal caught in a trap.

"I don't care what anybody thinks of me anyway," she flung at Mrs. Lindemuller, "You're all liars."

An hour afterward she was talking with Mrs. Lindemuller about setting the table for supper. She was calm, set as heavily in the earth of her resolution as the huge oak trees by the side of the hotel. She would have liked people to come and hack at her with their tongues and their eyes so that she could demonstrate her inflexibility. But there was no organized morality in Mt. Regis, no church nearer than the Catholic one seven miles away, and few of the country people were Catholic. Few families, too, could afford to cast more than a meaning smile or salacious remark in Mary's direction. They had their babies who came unaccountably soon to newly married folks, perhaps even a daughter who disappeared unexpectedly to visit distant relatives.

Mary was openly, and people thought, pathetically, devoted to the baby, whose carriage became a fixture outside of the store. Everybody stopped to peer in and chuck the fat, grinning child under the chin. "It's too bad," they said. And philosophically, "such things will happen." Only occasionally a virtuous matron, bounded by her marriage ring, sniffed: "Who'd think it of a girl like Mary Keyes. The quiet ones are the worst."

Letters from Irma reached Mary regularly. Sometime they began: "Dearest Sister Mary." Irma was so grateful and contented. She worked and went around with "dandy, good-looking fellows" She spoke of

marriage often and in the throes of urgent endeavor, but seldom of the baby. It was understood between them that, since she would probably never earn enough to keep the baby with her, she had made Mary a generous gift of Bessie.

X

WINTER hurried away the boarders and gripped the accredited inhabitants in a succession of brilliant days, so gigantically cold, they seemed suitable only for Mt. Olympus. Mt. Regis shut their overpowering grandeur out with barred windows and prostrated itself on the kitchen hearthstone and did homage to the God of Fire.

Snow fell and lay for months untouched, sweet and cool and white like virgin flesh. For months, hills and fields and roads returned a white blank glare to the stare of a blue, blank heaven. Gallant spirits of Mt. Regis snowshoed or skated sometimes, looking against all that whiteness like a few dark, peripatetic insects, trying industriously to make indentations in a placid, blanketed world.

Bob Deems came to snowshoe with Mary in the late afternoons, when the one winter train had disgorged the mail, without stopping, and moved on blustering to cover its guilty intrusion on the all-exclusive intimacy of snow and sky. He was the new station agent, the tall young man, with skin, hair, eyebrows and eyelashes of sandpaper who had helped her off the train. And, now that the admiring summer misses no longer cluttered his office, he had turned through sheer need of companionship to Mary. Unconsciously he made this so evident that, however she might wish, she could not twist any of his words or glances or smiles into a semblance of anything else.

They held each other's hands and twirled in lacelike patterns on the frozen lake. Mary taught him how to snowshoe. He sloshed about in the snow, fell, and she raised him. They had long, revealing talks and were sur-

prised into dusting bits of discarded mind—and emerged as unintimate, as far away, as ever. He even confided to her impersonally the conclusion he had drawn about love and marriage.

"When I marry, it's going to be a country girl, that's been brought up *clean* and learned how to cook real meals and keep a house. That's the kind of a little woman I want. I was brought up in the city and I've chased around some and believe me, I wouldn't marry a city girl for no consideration whatever. All they want is to get a man to support them in a two-by-four somewhere where they can buy delicatessen. I want a little girl who's going to make the kind of a wife my mother made. My mother was the best little woman I ever met up with."

He thought Miss Keyes was a respectable older, unmarried woman, obliterating herself nobly for the sake of her cousin's orphan child. He suspected a broken heart and engagement with his unworthy predecessor and evinced a quizzical sympathy. He talked well and easily, once started, and he had the worthiest opinions about everything, about morality and about religion and about friendliness and about love.

"I don't believe in this free love, excuse me for bringing up such a subject but you'll understand," he would say. "It's a pleasure to talk to a woman like you who doesn't think a man's always getting fresh. You know what I mean. There are things you don't want to discuss with people you don't know. These women who go in for free love in Greenwich Village and such places are the kind of women no man could respect and the men that stand up for it are the kind of slackers that don't want to support a wife and children. Now when I marry, my wife ain't going to do any wondering where the next meal's coming from ever, you bet. I believe a man has certain obligations to protect his woman and his kiddies. If he's the right kind, he wants to every time."

He was profuse with "excuse me's,"

which was his idea of being polite. He excused himself solemnly every time he spat, and opened doors punctiliously and touched her elbow whenever he thought he should help her over a threshold or up a stair. She was awkwardly, silently, grateful.

"What a good husband he will make for some girl," she considered wistfully.

One morning when she drove Mr. Deems over to the station on the sleigh she saw that he examined her more precisely with a new and furtive interest—an outlawed interest, slightly sickening. He replied with embarrassment to her greetings. But strangest of all was his sudden avoidance of the baby whom he had liked to tease and coax.

"He's been hearing stories about me," thought Mary with a resentful fear.

"Well, let him!" she said and ignored him soberly and painfully until little by little his mood changed and in his thorough loneliness he returned to their companionship. She was waiting for him quietly and she received him without question. It seemed to her that he doubted the gossip about her after all, that he had weighed it and dismissed it and thereafter had utter confidence in her.

She was tranquil that winter, filled with a serene, passive happiness at the snow and the intense blue sky and the mountain cold that whipped her blood to frothy fire instead of chilling it into dull, slothful mounds like the city cold. She cared for the baby and embroidered dresses for her all day long over the woodstove in the store, and every week with the complete devotion of a nun making her confession she wrote a long account of Bessie's progress and her small duties and the glorious weather to Irma.

XI

IN excess of well-being and reassurance she told Bob things about Irma, how pretty she was, how soft and dainty and light-tempered, and how well she was getting along in a big city like New York.

"I couldn't ever stand it," she con-

fessed, "but then Irma and me are so different."

"Sure," agreed Bob, "some people like the city best, some people'd rather have the country. Personally, I'm all for the country."

"Then you're just like me," she returned with a hopeful coquetry.

"I'm glad I am," said Bob. But his voice sounded hollow and bored.

The morning mail train, newly put on to signify that the mountains were emerging from hibernation, had just left. Bob was cleaning up the station, nailing cubbyholes, clearing his desk, throwing away old papers. He could now begin to find companionship in his work and he grudged the few minutes of gossip with Mary.

She stood in the doorway of the partition that blocked in his desk, with the light mail bag under her arm, opening a fat letter from Irma which she had just extracted. She had nothing to say but she wanted desperately to hold his attention. A snapshot fell out of the envelope and she seized it with an exclamation.

"Why here's a picture of my sister, taken in Central Park. Don't you think it's good?" He put out his hand indifferently for it, and was roused to a slight animation.

"Mm. She's a pretty girl."

"Oh, she's much prettier than that! A picture doesn't show up her coloring or her hair. But you'll see her for yourself. Listen, she writes: 'I think maybe I'll give the old d—the mountains the once-over this summer.' Isn't that great? I haven't seen her for such a long time."

"Well, that's fine. You—er—you like your sister a lot, don't you?"

"Why, what a funny thing to say. Of course I do. She's my sister."

"Oh, I don't know," laughed Bob. "I know some sisters that don't get on so well."

"Oh, not us. I'd do anything for Irma."

But his interest was definitely exhausted. He moved between his desk and the door impatiently. She folded

the picture and letter slowly into the envelope again, slung the mail bag to her shoulder.

"Well—good-by."

"Mm. See you later."

Clucking to the horse (the roads were too squodgy with rain for the Ford) the idea flitted back of her mind that he had remarked only casually on Irma's beauty. She remembered some book she had read in which the hero had comfortingly preferred the plain sister to the beauty.

"It happens that way sometimes," she told herself. Then a sense of disloyalty to Irma made her start and sit up vigorously and chide herself for a fool.

She piloted the horse in and out of grooves, under a heavy sky, with trees along the road holding a few skimpy leaves stiffly over their bareness. The world seemed to have drawn its last long quiet breath in the early dawn before rising to a day of new activities.

Driving back, Irma thought how it would feel to see Irma again and was happy, but somehow the happiness was clouded. Any recognition Irma gave her, she half suspected, only meant some new demand. She fretted helplessly when she thought that Irma might want some money or might exact her services as nurse or dressmaker. Though she knew she would acquiesce, she squirmed under the plaster cast of her sister's domination. She would have liked to use her bit of wages to buy a really new dress and hat in Malone, something for Bob to admire. Moreover, she dreaded the time when Irma should see her baby. It seemed to her that no mother could look upon the fat, rosy, jolly infant that Bessie, almost a year old now, had grown to be without proclaiming ownership. She had not dared to write Irma of the gossip prevalent in Mt. Regis about the baby. She believed that Irma, who she was convinced had a store of pride not hitherto touched, would fly home on the next train to take the blame.

To be sure Irma had seemed to surrender Bessie with relief, had made none but conventional queries about

her, but Mary could not look at the child without a clutching fear that Irma would covet her, that now she was coming home, she would perhaps marry one of her old beaux and find some respectable loophole for taking Bessie with her.

In her heart of hearts she hoped for things to stay as they were. The burden of Bessie, the burden of snickering insinuations, of innuendoes, had grown light through habit. She did not care if the country people who drove to the post office semi-weekly did stare at her secretly, whisper behind their hands and burst into a sudden laugh. She took refuge in glaring at them coolly, in despising them. But unknown burdens—new sorrows—she felt sure her knees would give way beneath them. Meanwhile, she went around telling Mrs. Lindemuller, Bob, everyone who stopped to talk to her: "Irma's coming back here on her vacation. Isn't that nice? I'm so glad."

XII

THE first words Irma said when she stepped off the morning summer boarders' train were, with a yawn: "It's the same old dump. I couldn't sleep a wink on that train. Got anything for me to eat, Mary?"

And the second words were: "Is that the new station agent you wrote about? He doesn't look so bad. I don't blame you for falling for him."

"Why, Irma, who said—"

"Oh, anybody with half an eye could see you were crazy about him. I suppose you're afraid to introduce me."

Mary introduced her to Bob. His eyes lingered over Irma, over her gay tweed suit, gayer in the flood of mountain sunshine, over the tiny black tam, hugging her elfish face, and projecting her great blue eyes straight to a beholder. Beside her sister, as usual, Mary sank into the background. He took Irma's luggage out to the Ford and lingered a moment as it jolted away, and Irma, turning the corner, flirted her

fingers at him in coquettish good-by. He beamed and waved violently.

"Not so bad, not so bad," declared Irma gaily.

She had not yet mentioned Bessie. The child was sleeping upstairs on Mary's bed, carefully railed in with pillows.

"Oh, let's look at the kid," said Irma, shedding her coat and hat anywhere in Mary's room. "She's all right, isn't she? Looks healthy enough. I tell you, Mary, I'm just starved. I can't open my mouth until I eat, and I've got lots to tell you. Come on. Where's Mama Lindy?"

In the dining room Mrs. Lindemuller fed her amply, taking care to ask in the lowered voice she always used in speaking of the child: "Have you seen Bessie?"

It seemed to Mary that Irma was frightened for the moment that she had been betrayed. She gave Mary a rapid, frowning glance that blamed her for the question and then answered effusively: "Oh, yes; nice kid, isn't she? Imagine us having to take care of her—some cousin we never laid eyes on. But Mary would do it. You know her."

Mrs. Lindemuller laughed and ambled away to tell her husband that Irma was standing right by her sister.

So Irma and Mary were alone together.

"I guess you think it's funny I came back to this dump on my vacation," began Irma between mouthfuls. "Well, I was going to a swell camp in Massachusetts with a girl from the store, and at the last minute she backed out. So I couldn't think of any place else. Gee, there are a lot of swell fellows up at that camp. That poor fish of a girl—at the last minute, when I had my clothes all packed and everything, I told her a few things, leaving me in the lurch like that."

"Well, how're you getting along, Mary? That station agent ain't so bad. What's his name? Bob Deems. Does he have anything to do with you?"

"Oh, he talks to me sometimes."

"Not married, is he? Don't look at

me like that. I tell you I'm sick and tired of hanging around that store all day and every day, and those guys in New York—all they want is to get you to—kiss them a coupla times for nothing. They get away with it, I'll say, but not with me, no more. Oh, all right, I forgot you hate to talk about those things. You *are* an old maid, Mary."

Before dinner, in Mary's room, after putting on a ruffly organdy dress and patting her hair, Irma fished a box of cheap cigarettes out of her jacket and lit one with a flourish.

"Irma!" cried Mary, horrified. "Don't. Why, Irma. In front of the baby!"

Irma turned on her with a disgusted grimace.

"Of all the old maids! What's the matter with a smoke? All the girls smoke."

"Not up here. Please don't, Irma. If Mrs. Lindemuller should see you."

Irma flared up. "Tell Mrs. Lindemuller. Go ahead. I suppose you go around telling everybody that—that I had a baby, anyway. I guess that's why Lindy looked at me so funny when she asked about the baby. Don't deny it. You can't fool me. And it's all your fault, too, let me tell you. What did I know about things? Any decent sister would have kept after me—and—a—a—girl—alone in Syracuse—without anybody—but you—such an old maid! A great wail and a fit of violent weeping followed, in which Irma attempted to grasp the baby, who woke up and howled. Mary beseeched her, pleaded with her, swore to eternal silence.

When the dinner bell rang Irma was quite calm again. She powdered her face, looked at herself in the mirror from all angles, and even stood up on a chair to get the effect of her legs flowing seductively out of the curves of her full skirt.

Irma sat opposite Bob at the dinner table. She devoted herself to him. She bent her tiny round chin on a slight hand and, pursing her mouth, attended gravely to his suddenly released stream

of opinions, comments, reminiscences. As she smiled and agreed, his eyes were for her alone, flitting with a sort of astounded and eager swiftness over her tiny, frail face, weighted by her big eyes, over the rounded slightness of her body, her arms, over the brown tendrils of hair low on her forehead and about her ears. Mary sat beside her and ate passively, methodically. Once she interpolated a "Yes" to some question Bob had addressed to her. There was a pause. She looked up and found his eyes absorbed in Irma. He had forgotten the question. Thereafter she did not open her mouth. At dessert she said "Excuse me" in the midst of the table banter. No one heard and no one noticed she had gone till many minutes later, when Irma said: "I guess we're through," turned and found her chair vacant.

She was quieting the baby, who was twisting about in the pillows on her bed, but her mind was following Irma and Bob in the swing back of the store, now wrapped in total blue darkness. From her window she caught a tiny, yellow twinkle like a star far below—the light of Bob's cigarette, and now and then a far-away tinkle of laughter like a bell in a forest—Irma's laughter. She sang to the baby a monotonous lullaby, and in her mind the refrain went on with a helpless, despairing monotony, "Bob, Bob, Bob, oh, Bob, Bob, Bob!"

XIII

THE consciousness of a secret and unreturned love is a perversion of happiness. It is like the sound of seductive music to one who passes a sealed garden. But the sight of the object of that love offering daily adulation to another is a concealed torture, like the stolen fox which gnawed at the vitals of the Spartan boy.

Mary had hardly a chance to talk to Irma now, not even at meals, since she usually helped Mrs. Lindemuller wait on table and ate before or after the guests. Irma and Bob went walking romantically early before breakfast and

appeared just after the bell, two summery figures close together on a sun-splotched road. After breakfast Irma walked down to the station with Bob; she accompanied him after lunch, and almost every day, at closing time, he hailed her gaily from his Ford, halted before the hotel and took her tearing down the road against the wind till supper time.

In the evenings Mary watched in silence while Irma religiously went through the detailed form of her toilet. She had covered Mary's dresser top, hitherto bare save for a comb, brush and hand mirror (a "set" presented to her by a summer boarder, and always lying rigidly in the same spots) with a collection of undreamed-of cosmetics, fluids, cakes, powders. They were flung anywhere, anyhow, in a mess of sprinkled powder, bits of absorbent cotton, combings, pins, threads, beads, earrings. Irma's hands grabbed impatiently here and there in the spattered conglomeration, but finally she emerged with a fresh, soft prettiness that she exhibited with delight for Mary's inspection, and, though Mary searched for flaws, she had to agree that, no matter by what means, Irma looked lovelier than ever.

Standing before the mirror one morning after Irma had dashed away, she made two reluctant dabs at her cheeks with Irma's rouge puff, and was startled to find how her gray eyes shot forth into a liquid brilliancy. She went to breakfast hoping for, yet fearful of notice, but no one looked at her save Mrs. Lindemuller, who said curiously: "Why, what are those two funny pink spots on your cheeks, Mary?" She mumbled something, trying to turn away her face, and hating Mrs. Lindemuller. After breakfast she went into the store and rubbed the rouge off secretly.

"Rouge makes one's eyes look brighter, doesn't it?" she remarked to Irma that night. Irma, busy penciling her brows, gave her a side look that said: "What are *you* thinking of?" and answered:

"Oh, not much. Mine are bright, anyway."

"I look just as nice without rouge as with it, don't I?" she declared, turning to Mary with her puff poised.

"Oh, I don't know," said Mary coldly. "Irma is so vain," she thought with exasperation.

At the moment she almost detested Irma. She had such moments often, brought on especially by Irma's attitude of thorough assurance that no one could take any interest in Mary while she was around, her belief that she was not only the centre of every stage, but that wherever she happened to be *was* the stage. One thing alone helped Mary to control her spasmodic rages. At night, lying awake beside Irma, or in the hot afternoons while she sorted mail or knitted, she thought with involuntary satisfaction that Irma's two weeks would be up very soon. She counted the days on her fingers. She reasoned that Irma spoke about Bob with a half-contemptuous inflection always. And then there was the baby. How could Bob, with his ideals of pure womanhood, confided and reiterated to her, think of marrying Irma when he learned about the baby? She felt satisfied that Irma would never get him.

But she wanted definite reassurance, and it worried her that, whenever she approached the subject of Bob with Irma, Irma should always shy away. Goaded to the point, she told Irma that she thought it "was a shame to lead a nice boy like Bob on when she knew—"

"You mean about the baby," sneered Irma. "You're always bringing that up to me. You aren't such a saint yourself from what I hear."

"Irma Keyes!"

"Oh," went on Irma recklessly, "don't yell at me. My ears are good. Lindy's told me a lot of stuff about you and Jenkins. I shouldn't wonder."

"Irma!"

"Oh, shut up. You're too much of a scare cat to do anything. But I don't know. It's funny Lindy should be so sure."

"You heard what they think about

me and the baby? When I did it all for you!"

Irma laughed hilariously.

"Don't be a fool, Mary," she coaxed. "I just wanted to tease you. It's such a good joke. You—and Jenkins! And do you know, Lindy said to me straight out: 'Bessie is hers, isn't she?' And I said: 'I guess you know Mary as well as I do. I guess you can decide whether she's hers or not!'"

"You mean you made her think it was true?"

"Oh, Mary, you make me sick. What could I say? You want me to come right out and say 'No, she's mine'?"

"She is yours?"

Immediately Irma sat up and glared.

"You go ahead and tell her, then. You're such a wonderful sister to me." The next minute, bursting into her easy tears, she knelt and flung her head in Mary's lap.

"Oh, I didn't mean it," she sobbed. "What can I do, Mary? I can't *suffer* any more than I have, can I?" She cried bitterly and, as usual, all Mary's anger was dissolved in Irma's tears.

Irma was pitiful and pale at dinner, and Bob looked at her anxiously. He urged her to come for a ride with him that night. They did not get back till very late. Mary could not sleep until Irma came in, but Irma was silent. She undressed slowly and lay in bed beside Mary, who pretended to be wrapped in unconsciousness. For hours they lay side by side, each noiseless, with a bar of suspicion between them. Toward morning Mary felt that Irma had at last fallen asleep. Then her strain of waiting for what she feared to know relaxed, and she too dozed.

XIV

BUT Mary did not need Irma's hints of future confidences to guess what had happened. She saw Irma and Bob standing close on the side porch that day before breakfast, and there was a quality to their proximity which told her. Yet she tried hard not to believe it, to think it was impossible, at least

until Irma should put her fears into so many words.

Later Irma came into the store to ask for paper and pen and sat behind the counter writing a letter painfully. When she handed it to Mary for the mail bag Mary saw that it was addressed to the New York store that employed her.

"I'm not going back," announced Irma, as she met her sister's questioning eyes. Mary would not allow herself to comment. She turned away so that Irma should not notice anything.

"I'm marrying Bob," went on Irma in a tone that was slightly defensive. "He's going to get the license in Malone tomorrow."

Mary was very quiet. The face she turned to Irma was blank with dull, wide-open eyes.

"Why don't you say something? What are you staring at me for?" said Irma impatiently.

"Does Bob know?" gulped Mary at last.

"Know? About Bessie? I should say not!"

"Irma!"

"And let me tell you," said Irma, her face setting to a blanched, determined mask. "If you tell him, I-I'll—you *wouldn't*. You couldn't anyway. He wouldn't believe you."

Mary could find no words for answer. She went back to her table, fingering papers at random. It did not seem to matter much what she did.

"I don't care," said Irma more easily. "I don't care what happens. I'm not going back to that old joint to work my head off. Bob's just mad about me. He told me the other night that he'd never looked at a girl until he saw me. He says he couldn't live without me. *There!* He's so *wild* about me, I'll bet even if I told him he wouldn't care." She finished on a new note of complacency that tortured Mary past endurance.

"Then why not tell him?" she cried. "You ought to tell him."

"I won't."

"Then what's going to become of Bessie? What'll you tell him about her?"

This seemed to astound Irma so that for a minute she was dumb. She stammered: "Why, I thought you wanted Bessie."

"If you marry Bob, you'll take Bessie." Mary set her teeth in grim rage, as simultaneously she recoiled from her words and wished she could take them back.

She added in haste, trying to clear her voice of anger:

"Nobody's talking about Bessie. He won't want her anyway. But I think you ought to tell him. If he finds out about Bessie after you're married, everybody talks so much—he'll leave you, Irma. I know Bob."

"You know Bob," said Irma with a shout of scornful laughter. "Yes, you do. Oh, yes, you do. You're just trying to keep me from marrying him—that's all because you're crazy about him yourself. Why, he wouldn't look at you for a minute. He told me he was just sorry for you, because—you—he thought you'd just made one mistake—but, after he heard, at first, he said, he couldn't bear you."

Mary could see that Irma was trying to stumble out of something. She flushed, twisted and looked frightened, and in a flash the idea became terribly clear to Mary. She could only stare at her sister in incredulous amazement, but when she began to talk her voice was clear and firm. She waited for Irma's answer with a springing intensity like that of a cat about to pounce on a mouse.

"Yes," said Irma, brazening it out. "He thinks Bessie is yours. He thinks Jenkins ran away because he didn't want to marry you. Isn't that funny?"

"No, it isn't funny," answered Mary calmly; "and he isn't going to think it much longer."

"You aren't going to—you devil!"

"You dirty little beast," said Mary in a level, contemptuous voice, which stunned Irma like a sudden missile.

She stood still, gasping, and then, with a burst of tears, ran out of the shop.

Great sobs of fierce resentment

fought with Mary all afternoon. It was then that she remembered the one other time when her hatred of Irma had reached the same proportion—that night when she had had to stand in a corner, while her mother petted Irma for spilling the soup. The injustice of it all twisted her throat into such a snarl of suppressed tears that she could not talk to her customers. Finally Mrs. Lindemuller urged her to go to her room.

XV

It was a surprise to find Irma not tossing recklessly on the bed, digging her head far into the pillows in abandoned grief, as Mary had often seen her. Instead she was sitting up straight and sullen-faced before the bureau mirror, studying herself in the glass. She did not move as Mary entered, but, coming closer, Mary saw that she held a tiny bottle in the hand that rested on the dresser.

"What's that?" she asked sharply.

"Veronal," said Irma in a tight, choked voice.

Mary was astonished to find how chill and sneering her own voice could sound when she heard herself saying: "You can't scare me that way."

Irma appeared to be just as much taken aback. "Not trying to scare you," she muttered.

"Then what are you trying to do?"

"Oh, laugh, laugh," moaned Irma; "go ahead and laugh at me. What do you care? You won't believe me till I'm dead. That's what you're trying to make me do so you can have Bob. But he'd never marry you. He wouldn't have you in a million years."

"I wish him joy of you."

Irma cried: "If you cared for him one little bit, you'd want to make him happy. He'll never be happy without me—and I—I'll kill myself if I can't have him. I'll kill myself and I'll kill the baby, too. I hate her—dirty, little—oh, why should I be made to suffer—and suffer—and suffer?"

Mary made no answer or motion.

"Oh, Mary!" Irma implored her.

She suddenly raised herself and before Mary could stop her ran and knelt in front of her sister, clasping Mary's knees so that her sister could not stir. She let loose a wild, hysterical whirlwind of appeals, like the blast that so easily uproots so many oaks, and even as it began Mary knew that she would be vanquished.

Irma threatened, promised, but chiefly she begged, and the burden of her maddeningly reiterated plea was: "Just promise not to say anything. You don't even have to say anything." She called upon her mother and upon all the meek, innocent saints in a hysteria so nicely, if unconsciously, calculated that with every word she found and split some vulnerable twig.

It was Mary who cried out in exhaustion at last: "Let me go! For heaven's sake, let me go!" and sat heavily on the bed. Irma remained on the floor, gulping huge, whispering sobs that seemed each one to strain the capacity of her lungs.

Then they both became aware, like people rescued from a shipwreck, whose ears are still partly full of the lashing of waves and waters, of an insistent pounding on the door. When Mary opened it, Mrs. Lindemuller stood there, peeping in curiously at Irma.

"We're waiting supper for you," she announced. "What's the matter?"

"It's Irma. She doesn't feel well."

"Is that so? Why, what's the matter? And Deems was just telling us how you and he are going to be married!"

"I'm not going to be married, at all, ever—" groaned Irma from the floor.

Mrs. Lindemuller emitted a gasp of concern and tried to edge into the room.

"Yes, she is, she's just sick, that's all. Now I've got to put her to bed."

Quietly but effectively, Mary managed to shut the door. She listened a minute and heard Mrs. Lindemuller moving away with reluctant feet, then she went to Irma and raised her with a jerk.

"No use starting the whole town talking," she observed.

Irma submitted, dazed, to orders to lie down. With a little ball of wet handkerchief that stuck to her palm she smudged a few last tears from her face. She knew she was the victor and could afford to lie on her bed in the darkened room, dabbing at the tray of food Mrs. Lindemuller had sent up and shedding with enjoyment, some last slack, warm tears.

In the meanwhile, the vanquished sat through dinner, masking her fever of bitterness with grave stolidity.

That night, after Mary had undressed Bessie, and while she was trying to feel her way into bed without a light, so as not to disturb her sister, Irma called to her quietly, in a voice still weak with tears.

"Mary."

"Yes."

"Mary, I've been thinking. I'm sorry for everything I ever said to you. There's no one, not even Bob, I love so much as you. Mary, I think you are a saint."

"Never mind," said Mary, low. "Go to sleep."

The next instant, Irma's arms were about her and her head rested on Mary's shoulder. She put up a hand and stroked Mary's cheeks confidently like a child that promises a loving mother not to be bad any more.

"I'll make it up to you," she whispered. "You don't hate me any more, do you, Mary?"

"No."

"You couldn't. You're an angel."

Irma went off to sleep in this way, resting against Mary. Mary tried not to shrink from the warm, loose feel of her body, tried to reason that she had done the right thing and the best thing, tried to convince herself that she was glad Irma would be happy, that she would love her, expecting nothing from her, always. But she had to give up. She could not sleep because the knowledge of Irma eternally victorious beat restlessly on her brain.

"Why should she have all; I always

nothing?" she demanded mutely of a deaf universe, and stretched an arm over the blankets in entreaty. It touched lightly the sleeping baby beside her and a tiny glint of comfort divided her night of jealousy and hatred. Irma could never have the baby. She hitched away from her sister in a relief that signalized her release from bondage and encircled the baby lightly with her arm. Bessie would be something to live for anew.

XVI

IRMA and Bob were married at the hotel by a minister specially wired for from Syracuse. The women boarders welcomed the excitement and lapped up all the details of preparation with flushed faces. They couldn't get too much of it. Neither could Irma. If she had been on confident terms with Mary she would have exacted a wedding gown even at the risk of postponing the nuptials. But she was afraid of Mary's silences. However, she borrowed a white organdy dress and she wore Mrs. Lindemuller's wedding veil. She had a bouquet of white roses, contributed by the boarders, who vowed that she looked like one herself, and she had a matron of honor, Mrs. Lindemuller, and one bridesmaid, a stray girl picked up about the hotel, who adored the vicarious thrill of weddings. The boarders wondered in shrill excitement why she hadn't asked her sister, and if there had been an estrangement. Mary heard one woman volunteering to "speak to her" about it. She waited grimly for that woman to come, but the others hushed her up, and Mary understood that there was talk that Mary had liked Bob and that some of the women had spared enough sentiment from Irma to sympathize with Mary.

But she shouldn't have expected it, even the party for her agreed. "What with the baby and—" then a cryptic shrug.

After that, Mary had to see the wedding. With vicious irony, she in-

sisted on keeping the baby up for it. She would not listen to Mrs. Lindemuller's protests. As for Irma, the only thing that worried her was that Mary might be planning a revelation at the altar, with the baby as the central figure. She hated to ask, but she was harassed by the need of watching Mary stealthily and pondering over her actions, and Mary knew it.

How she wanted to see Irma hurt, to see her self-assurance shaken by a twist of luck, to see her plunged into unexpected failure! She was buoyed up somewhat by a childish anticipation of some dreadful thing at the last moment that would stop the wedding. Surely God was holding His just punishment in abeyance only so that it might fall with a louder thud.

It did occur to her that, after all, she held the shot in her own hands, but more than by her silent promise to her sister, she was held back by the fear that Bob would hate her more for telling him than he would loathe Irma for deceiving him, that he might go away immediately, that she would never see him again, would never even know what had become of him. Whichever way she played the cards, in the end she would lose. Only if she held her tongue, she would at least save the gentleness and respect which Bob showed to her. He had none of the deprecatory way with her that a man assumes with a woman he doesn't care for and who, he knows, is devoted to him. She didn't think he even imagined that he had any place in her thoughts except as her sister's future husband. She had always put Irma forward, only, of course, that she might hide behind her, but that aspect would never occur to a man.

The ceremony, after all Mary's forebodings, did not prove to be much of an ordeal. The baby fell asleep immediately, in spite of the glare and the little shrieks, the unceasing talk at the top of strained voices. She slept heartily through everything so that Mary had to move her chair into a corner and hold her. People stopped

in the doorway, as they came in, surveyed the room, flung a "hello" and a mechanical nod and smile in her general direction and hurried to join the giggling, joking group about Irma and Bob. Nobody even noticed that she had the baby with her.

Weddings were not so numerous in that countryside that Irma's could be disregarded, and all the inhabitants of the neighboring farms, together with strangers who boarded at them in summer, and groups of people nobody had ever seen from camps hidden in the woods, drove over to scrutinize the bride and groom. It seemed to Mary like one of the hotel parties, all high voices and indigestible refreshments, through which she had sat sometimes, for the sake of curiosity rather than amusement. She could hardly see Irma and Bob standing in front of the minister, much less hear the responses. She knew it was over only when people began to shout and stamp.

Then Mary felt that she had borne it very well and that she could go and deposit the baby. Unreasonably, she was expecting Irma to come up, to be alone with her for a few minutes, to make her farewells. Bob had got a week off for the honeymoon, and they were motoring to Montreal. It had been a romantic idea of Irma's to start late at night and arrive in Malone, their first stopping place, at midnight.

She heard Irma's voice very loud and merry, saying quick good-byes on the porch and explaining how lovely it would be to ride in the moonlight, and the departing guests answering with knowing insinuations. Then Irma bounced up the stairs and down the hall, passing her old room with brisk steps, and Mary suddenly noticed that none of Irma's clothes lay about the room. Her valise and her traveling suit, which had been spread over a chair earlier, were gone. Could she have taken her things to Mrs. Lindemuller's room, she wondered in horror? How could Irma do that, how could she have dared! But it seemed true. The Lindemullers chattered, Irma gig-

gled, Bob commanded, and soon Bob's car chugged in front of the hotel.

"Good-bye," shrieked all the boarders from the patched gloom of the porch, and "Good-bye" responded Irma and Bob gaily.

It was no longer to be doubted. Free of the last uncertainty, Irma had deliberately planned this little revenge for Mary's antipathy. She never could bear people who did not immerse themselves absolutely in her own enthusiasms or ambitions, at least, not after they had ceased to be of use to her. It would have been annoying to be happy against Mary's hard face and with the baby in the background. Irma did not wish to be reminded, Mary guessed, and since there was only an empty field left to the victor, Irma had fled without giving battle. Now that she knew Irma, it shouldn't matter at all, and yet the world had gone thoroughly blank and gray for Mary. A colorless world to walk through with eyes shut, but a world that must be got through somehow, since at least she had the baby to carry.

XVII

WHEN Irma and Bob came back they lived at the hotel, while Bob looked about for a bigger and better station. Bob had all the makings of an ideal husband. He treated Irma like a bit of Sevres china and had an utterly humorless belief in her right to unworried leisure and his right to a protective servitude, below and yet above her.

The security of marriage to Bob made a noticeable difference to Irma. It smoothed lumps of querulousness, moodiness. She was complacently sweet even to commonplace people whom she had overlooked, even to Mary, and more and more, even to the baby. Now that she was a matron, now that she had a very much recognized right to a speculative interest in babies, she could not keep from coddling and fussing with Bessie. Strangest of all, she never hid her devotion

from Bob, who admired her for it. Mary used to find them after supper, sitting close together on the side porch, the baby in Irma's lap, when she went to put it to bed. Inarticulate, endearing murmurs from Bob trickled out to her. She would intrude on them with vindictiveness, snatch the placid baby, who passed complacently from one to the other, and carry her away, hugged in her arms. She thought Irma was using the baby just to play a new part with, and she would not have Bessie made a piece of stage property.

She wished for Bob and Irma to move from Mt. Regis as she had never wished for anything in her whole life perhaps. To endure their presence was like walking across a field of burning coals. At each step, at every encounter with them, she thrilled afresh with pain, and ahead of her lay always another step, another encounter. But that would be over sometime. Beyond the field of coals lay her ordinary road, if not a happy one, at least an even and a sure one.

She would build a hammock on the side porch when Bob and Irma had gone, and in it she would lie with the baby at sunset, when some of the hills wrapped themselves in gray chiffon and some in gold, and beyond them, on a level with her eyes in the hammock, lay a lake of gold. This lake narrowed and narrowed till soon it was like a thin streamer of ribbon from the hair of an Olympian goddess, and then like the startled flicker of a gigantic candle, which suddenly sputtered and went out, leaving the mountains ghosts, felt, but hardly seen, and the whole country like a black vault, and the trees rustling adumbrations. It was like creeping into the secret darknesses of the mind of the earth. There was a gloomy peace in it, like the peace of failure attained at last for all time. One sank into it, saturated oneself in it until one found that it was too overpowering to bear in consciousness. Then one caught up the baby and hurried to bed,

XVIII

MT. REGIS still remembers how the Deems finally left town. Bob was being transferred to a small city in Ohio, and they were going on the evening train, by way of New York, a concession to Irma. As the train left at an awkward time, when most people roundabout were eating supper, farewells had been made in the afternoon. Irma had been down at the station all day, presumably helping Bob. They came back for supper, strangely silent, yet tender toward one another. Mrs. Lindemuller said later she had sensed "something funny," but at the time it appeared to her only natural that Irma should be subdued at leaving her home probably forever, and that Bob should take his tune from her mood. They both went up to Mary's room at once, which was also natural, and stayed with Mary a long time.

When they came to supper, dressed for travel, Bob looked exceedingly white, grim, and even somewhat frightened, but Irma seemed cheerful again, though her jaw was obstinate. She reported that Mary did not feel well enough for supper. "How she takes it to heart," Mrs. Lindemuller thought. She asked if Mary would drive with them to the station.

"No, I don't think so," murmured Irma. Bob kept his eyes on his plate. Mrs. Lindemuller offered to go up and see Mary, but they both jumped up and admonished her with decision to "please let Mary alone." Mrs. Lindemuller was too busy to argue, but she kept her eyes open. She saw Irma and Bob whisper to each other. She watched Bob go upstairs and carry down an additional bag, which he stowed in the Lindemullers' old Ford.

The rest of the boarders had not finished supper when Irma and Bob said brief, unenthusiastic good-byes. Mrs. Lindemuller kissed Irma and stood out on the porch to wave to them. Irma and Bob halted in the road, and glanced at each other and Irma said brightly, as if prompted: "Lindy, would

you wrap up a few doughnuts for us?"

Mrs. Lindemuller was delighted and trudged back to the pantry. She thought she heard the motor chugging and, running to the kitchen window, she saw with astonishment that Bob had circled the hotel and stopped the car before the back door. And there was Irma running down the back stairs, holding a long bundle in her arms. Before she had time to do more than open her eyes, as she afterward narrated, she saw Irma dash into the car. Bob started it immediately.

Mrs. Lindemuller shouted, "Bob, Irma." They turned their heads fleetingly and called, "No time to wait, G'bye," while the car sputtered and backed down the path. She had just time to drop the doughnuts and run to the side porch before the car found the road and fled, spitting out the dust behind it and churning it into a veil which hid its occupants. But Mrs. Lindemuller had got a plain look at the bundle which showed it was a baby. She rushed upstairs to Mary and found her sitting on the bed with her face buried in a pillow. She was not crying. She was trying, with contortions of her back and shoulders, to make herself cry.

"It's her baby," she said to Mrs. Lindemuller. "They wanted to take it."

At the moment, Mrs. Lindemuller felt as if she ought to call "Stop thief," or send someone in pursuit. It was as if two strange people had run off with something of Mary's. Then she remembered her own mistake and was partly aghast and partly reveling at the power of disclosure which she had. She tried to take Mary's hand in her warm, wet palm.

"Let me alone," said Mary.

Mrs. Lindemuller did not know what to do. It seemed to her that Mary was dying somewhere in her mind. It was impossible to let anyone die alone. She sat affrightedly on the bed, listening to Mary's breathing. The evening train whistled into the night, and then they heard it dragging its

length noisily out again. Mrs. Lindemuller remembered that she had to go down to tell her husband to fetch the car, which now stood empty at the station. She trotted out quietly, bursting with the boomerang she was going to throw into the evening conversation. Mary's head lay motionless in the pillow.

XIX

WITH a start, Mt. Regis roused itself to contemplate tragedy, but it could not understand why she should be so desolate. While people knew it to be the appropriate gesture to be sympathetic toward Mary, they confessed to themselves that it was hard to see a reason for pity. Granted that Mary had been misjudged, she was now rid of her sister and of the encumbrance of a foster child. Why should she go about as if she were searching for a loophole in blank walls?

"Mary always was a funny one," people said conclusively. "Now Irma—"

Then they discussed Irma with outward disapproval which could not quite mask the gleeful admiration accorded to people who manage, through every obstacle, to get what they want. Eyes were narrowed, chins were lowered, and lips were thinned and curved, in the hint of a smile, heads were jerked in an emphatic half-nod, and people murmured, as if betraying a secret, "Now Irma, she certainly is a smart one—"

What everybody peeped and whispered and moved together in corners to find out was exactly how Irma had induced Bob to accept the baby. When had she told him, how had she told him? Mary would know, but not even Mrs. Lindemuller dared to ask her. So the town smothered and crackled with anxiety to find out.

Mary did not know, but she could guess. Hadn't Irma boasted, trying to strike a spark of envy from Mary, that she could get anything she wanted from Bob, that he would stand for anything.

"Even," she added, "something you were always so sure he wouldn't stand for."

There was a sort of threat in the emphasis she put on the words. But until she was confronted with Bob and Irma on the afternoon of their departure, it had never remotely occurred to Mary, not even in dreams, that they would want to take Bessie from her. She hated herself bitterly for a fool to have given her up at once, almost without demurring. She would have had to give her up in the end, but she should have brazened it out, shrieked, denied, stormed and held firmly what she wanted to call her own. That was Irma's method.

The slightest semblance of authority always made Mary shrink and surrender. It was the fault of an innate humbleness of mind. Bob, as rigid in what he would no doubt call his manliness, as a virtuous movie actor, and Irma, shuddering in outraged motherhood behind him, had demanded Bessie—"my child," declared Irma. As Mary remembered it, she had been paralyzed. She listened to Bob. He said things like this: "You hate my wife so much that we are afraid you may harm the child. It was you and your bad example that got her into trouble. You made her lie to me in the first place. You shan't keep her from her happiness. You encouraged my poor little girl to do wrong, and now you try to keep her child away from her. Every mother has a right to her child. You can't do it. You can't do it while she has me." That was how it sounded. And from somewhere, beyond, she could hear Irma crying: "Yes, yes," and swallowing her sobs.

Mary couldn't find her voice. She wanted to speak and the words were throttled in an underground tavern.

"I want my baby's clothes," wept Irma, and pulled open the bottom drawer where Bessie's little wardrobe lay in two piles. She grabbed up the clothes in her arms and Bob pulled Mary's hands unceremoniously away from the baby. They went out to their

room. Soon she heard them turn the key and walk downstairs. She forgot about supper. Her mind did not work logically. They had disappeared and the baby with them. She turned her face to the pillow as to a wall.

Later she was astonished at a knock on her door and the appearance of Irma holding the baby, her face glowing with excitement.

"Good-bye," gasped Irma. "I'll write. The baby'll be all right. I had to have her."

She was gone.

Then Mrs. Lindemuller came and sat and looked on at her misery as at the sorrows of a performer on a stage. To her, Mary thought she announced: "It's her baby." And then she struggled for tears. Surely her grief demanded an outward symbol. But it was impossible. It was like squeezing tears out of a corpse.

XX

IN a week she had her first letter from Irma, which said that Bob was fine, and she was well and the baby was all right and added that she was busy getting settled and Bob did not like her to write, but she would drop Mary a line now and then to tell her about the baby. There was a discreet sentence asking Mary to remember that after all, she, Irma, had "not said anything bad about you." It was only Bob, and he was so funny when he was excited. What Irma wanted to know, it appeared, was "What people are saying about me."

Mary answered that she didn't know what people were saying about Irma, which was quite true. She begged passionately for further news of the baby. She wanted to relent toward Irma, because then sometime she could see the baby. It would be a peak to raise her eyes to in her flat life, something to save money for and dream about. There was an interval of weeks and now—this stray letter at the beginning of autumn, with its intimation that it was the last. Bob hated her so much that

he had practically forbidden Irma to write. What indefinable things Irma must have hinted about her.

She knew Mt. Regis had a private opinion that she was rather a fool, and she thought it true. She acquiesced so easily, especially to her own disadvantage. She was a fool to have relinquished the baby so easily, and now it was gone, she was a greater fool to insist on living in an emotional vacuum. She was not yet thirty. Sometimes she

felt sure she would forget, find new hopes and loves to fill up the vacuum and again she was sadly certain that these would always be substitutes, half ghosts, half shams. Nothing would ever be as real to her as her blissful loss of self in sacrifice, in admiration, in protective care, as her agony of hurt. No woman would ever stand in such a relation to her as Irma, no man could ever quite be what Bob had been, no baby would ever be so sweet as Bessie.

(The End)



Sonnet

By Ben Ray Redman

ON fire for beauty, with sure hands and eyes
 Conspiring toward perfection's end, he sought
 Through lonely years that knew no compromise
 To shape in marble what no man had wrought.
 Missing the whole, he seized the better part
 And knew, at last, that beauty stood ensnared.
 He turned to men, contentment in his heart:
 Some mumbled vaguely, others blankly stared.

There was in him, perhaps, some flaw: he fled,
 Grotesquely broken, from the rack of pain.
 No more alone . . . companioned by cold hate,
 Twisted by bitterness, with hand and head
 Intent on blasphemy, he wrought again . . .
 And men, discov'ring him, acclaimed him great.



THE fool always tries to read between the lines of a woman's letter. The wise man always tries to read between the lines of her face.



JUDGE a man not by the girl he is going with but by the girl he has just stopped going with.



FEAR has got a whole lot of people into trouble, and a whole lot more into Heaven.

Répétition Générale

By George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

§ 1

CONNUBIAL Bliss.—The discovery that the annual divorce rate in the United States now runs to nearly 25% of the annual marriage rate gives the editorial writers of the newspapers another excuse to deluge the nation with pious drivel. The conclusion drawn from the figures by these half-wits is that marriage is in decay among us, and that the home stands imperilled. But the plain fact, standing clearly before anyone with eyes to observe it, is that nine-tenths of those who are divorced appear to marry again as soon as possible, and that fully 95% of all Americans continue to live more or less comfortably in homes. There is, in truth, not the slightest cause for alarm in the current statistics. All they actually prove is that the old superstitious horror of divorce is dying out in the land, and with it the old suspicion of the divorcée. Roughly speaking, about a quarter of all the marriages contracted in the Republic turn out unhappily. Well, what is the evidence that fewer turned out unhappily in the days when a divorced woman's status socially was midway between that of a fortune-teller and that of a street-walker? There is absolutely none to offer. The only difference is that in those days the unhappy wife (or husband) stood it until the angels came to the rescue, whereas now they cut the agony short by sending for a shyster lawyer.

I am a bachelor, and have no gift for marriage. It is only, indeed, when I am slightly stewed that women genuinely amuse me, and even then the thing

that amuses me most is the consciousness that my hat and walking-stick are standing in the hall, and that I am quite free to grab them and run whenever the spirit moves me. What is euphoniously called the give-and-take of marriage is beyond my poor talents. I hate to be wheedled into doing things that I don't want to do, or to be forbidden to do those that I incline to. I am, in brief, a vain, saucy and bombastic fellow, and I have yet to meet any woman rascally enough to deserve the fate of being put to living with me. But the fact that I lack connubial genius is surely no indication that all other men lack it. On the contrary, the circumstance that my vanity is of a peculiar virulence should suggest the notion that my infirmity may be singular too, and this, indeed, I believe to be the case. At least three-fourths of all American men, it seems to me, have a natural talent for marriage, and are never so happy as when deftly run and regulated by their wives. They do not resent being led gently by the nose; they enjoy it—and that enjoyment is a proof of their common sense, for a man with common sense is simply one who understands clearly that perfect liberty, in this worst of worlds, is unobtainable, and who makes the best of doing without it. For most men, marriage is the best of a bad job, and when I say best I mean it. The alternatives are much worse.

What theory thus brings us to is supported by everyday observation. The notion that the average American husband and wife, or even any considerable proportion of American husbands and wives, carry on day in and day out like

the characters in the last act of an Ibsen play is sheer nonsense. They differ, of course, very often, and in some ways they dislike one another intensely, but that is also true of business partners, members of the Cabinet and canons of cathedral churches: it is no more than saying that they are human. The important thing is that their points of agreement are vastly more numerous than their points of difference and aversion—that it is enormously to the advantage of the average husband, as it is to the advantage of the average wife, to keep the farce going without reducing it to melodrama and disaster. In other words, they are more comfortable married, for all the occasional intense discomforts, than they would be separated, and so they hang together. For exactly the same reason a man continues to pay dues to his club, though he seldom enters its doors and has only detestation for most of his fellow-members. A club is dull and irksome, but it is useful on rainy days. So is a marriage.

The increase in divorces, as I say, is largely imaginary. What is real in it is simply an increase in the number of persons who can go through the mill without risk of social disaster. This increase shows a growth of civilized ideas in the United States, despite the apparent proliferation of Puritan prejudices and inhibitions. The two things, indeed, may not stand in opposition at all. The Puritan is violently opposed to all recreations countenanced by the Devil, but there is no record that he is opposed to the joys legitimate to holy wedlock, which is ordained, according to his theory, by God. On the contrary, he is, and always has been, a very uxorious and philoprogenitive fellow. When, exhausted by a too assiduous fecundity, his wife dies, he almost invariably finds a successor for her in the Foreign Mission Society, and usually very quickly. Thus it is not difficult for him to imagine remarriage after divorce, and once he has got over that, to imagine divorce itself. No doubt he is helped here by the circumstance that the brethren of the Latin rite are against it. The eccle-

siastics of this rite, by his theology, are not only heathen, but also direct flouters of God's expressed will, for they refuse to marry themselves. Thus whatever they are opposed to begins to fascinate him, and in the end, finding himself perchance with an unsatisfactory wife who fails to die, he resorts to the secular arm and has her put away. Here it must be remembered that a Puritan, despite his general talent for marriage, has many more reasons than a non-Puritan for complaining of his wife. A Catholic thinks that his wife is satisfactory so long as she does not take a lover, call his son Wesley or feed him meat on Friday. But a Puritan is forced to excommunicate her and kick her out if he finds her doing nothing worse than taking a jigger of Bourbon for female weakness or smoking a cigarette.

The ecclesiastical objection to divorce, by whatever variety of theologian it may be voiced, is always specious and casuistic. There is absolutely no prohibition of it in the Scriptures on which all the discordant Christian faiths are theoretically based. The doctrine to the contrary is precisely on all fours with the doctrine that the Scriptures ordain Prohibition. Divorce and wine-bibbing, in fact, are not only not forbidden by the Bible; they are commanded and commended by the Bible. When a clergyman launches an anathema upon a remarried divorcée and announces solemnly that she is living in adultery, he is simply talking nonsense, just as his brother is talking nonsense when he argues that it is immoral and against God to violate the Eighteenth Amendment. The sole effect of such pishposh is to lose customers for the offending pastor. The Methodists, who are without professional conscience, take shrewd advantage of the fact. In practically all American communities they specialize in the remarriage of divorcées, and every time they conduct such a ceremony, in addition to charging a whacking fee for it, they hand some of their circulars to the high contracting parties. This gets them many liberal customers.

But they lose most of them very quickly by advocating Prohibition. A woman who has risked Hell by getting a divorce is certainly not likely to believe seriously that drinking a few seidels of beer of an evening will do her much further harm.

§ 2

The Harvard Standard.—Cabot Lowell Higginbottom, 100%. Alexandre Dumas, —1%.

§ 3

The Monthly Award.—*Répétition Générale's* grand prix $3\frac{1}{2}$ by $4\frac{3}{4}$ custard pie is awarded this month to the American Radiator Company ("Ideal Boilers and American Radiators for Every Heating Need") of New York and Chicago, for its advertisement appearing in the current public prints. The advertisement is headed "American Ideals," is emblazoned with a reproduction of a portrait of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and reads as follows:

Long after the other signers of the Declaration of Independence had passed away, Charles Carroll of Carrollton still lived—an embodiment of the great American Ideal. They are inspiring words—American and Ideal; it was not by chance that this company chose them to designate its products. They were chosen as a solemn pledge that this country, where men are born free and equal, should be the best warmed country in the world.

The second prize, a handsome tin toothpick, is this month awarded to Mr. Will Hays for any speech on the moving pictures that he makes next month.

§ 4

The Higher Learning in America.—Extracts from a news article in the *San Francisco Examiner* of January 2:

The University of California will inaugurate within a few weeks a course in hotel management. . . . Aside from fulfilling the regular requirements for the usual academic degrees, students will be required to serve in

the capacity of bellboys, engineers, stewards, clerks, chambermaids and auditors. . . . Northwestern University, Chicago, proposes a similar course.

§ 5

Notes from an Unwritten Autobiography.—1. I admire persons with hard common sense, but I find that they usually make very uninteresting companions.

2. It has been my experience that tall women are generally dull conversationalists.

3. I distrust the geniality of fat men.

4. I stopped sending flowers to women twenty years ago, finding that no charming, intelligent woman really wants them and regards the man who sends them as something of a doodle.

5. When a man tells me that he has seen this or that old friend of mine and that he or she is very happy, I pause to reflect upon my informant's concept of happiness as opposed to my own.

6. My closest, dearest friends of fifteen years ago and I have absolutely nothing in common today.

7. One may tell the truth with impunity only to very pretty women.

8. I have found that stockbrokers take much delight in striving to be intellectual at the dinner table.

9. Art is a subject for artists. Let the rest talk of what they understand.

10. There is no function so stupid as that presided over by a too jolly host.

11. The duller the man, the more salted almonds he eats.

12. In the words of a friend of mine, I drink to make other people interesting.

13. I have never yet seen a woman who looked alluring when clothed in satin

§ 6

Minor Prophecy.—Prohibition has had this curious effect in America: that it has made impracticable the remedy for it that is usually advocated. I allude, of course, to the licensing of the sale of light wines and beer. In 1918 such a plan might have been put into

effect with good results, for the American consumption of spirits had been declining for years, and the use of wine, chiefly due to the influence of Italian restaurants, was growing rapidly. But three years of Prohibition have made Americans a nation of whiskey and gin drinkers once more, as they were before the Germans brought in lager beer in the '50's of the last century. Light wines and beer would not satisfy them now; there would be just as much boot-legging under that sort of license as there is today. When the reaction comes it will have to go all the way. The net result of Prohibition, whether it is retained or abandoned, will be to convert the American people into the race of hard-liquor guzzlers that they were in Daniel Webster's day.

§ 7

Literary Criticism.—Excerpt from a critical review in a recent number of the Book Review Section of the New York Times:

The American sense of humor is a unique tribute, and one not to be found in any other country.

§ 8

On Vigor.—Vigor is an overestimated quality. Much of the greatest and most dramatic work in the world has been done by men who have been just a bit tired.

§ 9

The Englishman and the American.—The Englishman: "I have met Thomas Hardy." The American: "I have met the Mountbattens."

§ 10

The Word of God.—Of all the religions practised in this world by literate races, Christianity in its various forms lays the heaviest stress upon minute and childish details of doctrine. The reasons on which, for example, a

Catholic bases his belief that his Protestant neighbors will go to Hell are such as would make the average intelligent Buddhist or Shintoist belch with astonishment. Very few of them have to do with essentials of faith; most of them simply concern trivial matters of discipline and ceremonial. Among the Protestants there is an even more absurd cherishing of petty tricks, dodges and mountbankeries. It is, for example, a cardinal doctrine of the Baptist faith that a candidate for immortality, in order to be absolutely sure of a seat upon the right hand of God, must be completely submersed in water, so that not even his ears protrude. It is not enough to turn a hose upon him or douse him with a bucket; he must be ducked bodily. Expound such a doctrine to any Chinaman above the mental level of a coolie, and he will snicker at you behind his hand. Nevertheless, it is not six months ago that Baptist press-agents were filling the world with the news that the Premier of Great Britain and the President and Secretary of State of the United States were believers in that grotesque ducking. All of these gentlemen, at the time, were heavily engaged in "civilizing" Brahmins, Parsees and Confucians. It was precisely as if three Rotary Club secretaries had essayed to instruct Prof. Dr. Einstein in mathematics—or table manners.

§ 11

Observation of an Old Savant.—Nothing is more ridiculous than the spectacle of a man with a top hat in his hand simultaneously trying to make love.

§ 12

Emotion and the Artist.—The notion, held by certain artists, that an artist can most convincingly record emotion when he himself is from one romantic cause or another afire with emotion is directly kin to the notion that a drunken man makes the best bartender.

§ 13

The Heretic's Progress.—From an article by Mary Austin in the estimable *Century Magazine*:

The writer joined the Methodist Church at the mature age of eleven, later was disciplined for teaching a Sunday-school class that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, and finally was dropped from membership for organizing and taking part in a community theater. . . . All that I am trying to say here is that there exists in America a live search for an authentic relation to Allness. . . .

§ 14

Codes of Honor.—Every now and then the newspapers make it known that some State Editorial Association in an obscure and backward state or some convention of teachers of journalism—i.e., incompetent journalists who have given up the struggle—has met to formulate a code of journalistic ethics. Nothing more, of course, is ever heard of the matter. If, as sometimes happens, a sonorous and pious code is actually drawn up and signed in blood, it becomes as much a dead letter the day afterward as the Seventh Commandment or the Eighteenth Amendment. No American newspaper, so far as I am aware, has ever made any serious attempt to carry out the terms of any such code. The day one does so I shall be prepared to hear that the governors of the New York Stock Exchange have passed a resolution requiring stockbrokers to observe the Beatitudes.

The truth is that journalism, if it may be called a profession at all, is not a profession that is autonomous and privileged, and hence it cannot adopt and enforce standards of honor. It may be, in a furtive, disingenuous way, moral, but it cannot be honorable, for honor presupposes absolute freedom. The man of honor does this or refrains from doing that because he wants to, not because he has to. The minute external pressure is brought to bear upon him he ceases to be a man of honor, and becomes simply a moral man, which is

to say, a slave and poltroon. The thing that forces a newspaper editor down to that level is the plain fact that he is not wholly his own man. Over him stands a superior power, without professional spirit and unreachable by professional discipline, to wit, the owner of his paper. No profession which stands under the shadow of any such power can maintain true professional dignity and autonomy. Above all, it cannot maintain professional standards of honor.

Lawyers may make rules to govern themselves and even keep them on occasion, for they have a genuine autonomy within the fold of their profession, and no external power can destroy it. Physicians and surgeons are free in exactly the same way. No single client or patient can take away or even threaten seriously the livelihood of his lawyer or doctor. Every such threat, indeed, if it involve a matter of professional honor, is apt to benefit rather than damage the man threatened. But a newspaper editor is the slave of his owner, who is free to discharge him at any moment. True enough, he may look for another job, but that is simply entering upon a new slavery. He cannot resist effectively; most of all, he cannot fortify his resistance by appealing to the professional spirit of his brethren, for most of them are quite impotent to help him and those who are not are afraid to imperil their own jobs. It must be obvious that professional honor, in the strict sense, is impossible to men so beset from without. They may practise, within limits, a reasonable decency, but they cannot take a pledge to practise it unfailingly, nor can they enforce its mandates upon colleagues who are weak or vicious. The lawyers and doctors have that necessary power. They, and they alone, can destroy a colleague who violates their collective concept of professional honor. No one else can do it, but they themselves can do it.

Thus journalistic codes of ethics are all moonshine. Essentially, they are as absurd as would be codes for street-car conductors, barbers or public job-

holders. If American journalism is to be purged of its present swinishness and brought up to a decent level of repute—and God knows that such an improvement is needed—it must be accomplished by the devices of morals, not by those of honor. That is to say, it must be accomplished by external forces, and through the medium of penalties exteriorly inflicted. Perhaps the most practicable of those forces is legislative enactment, though its growing weakness, chiefly from over use, is apparent to all. Most of the offenses against decency that journalists commit—for example, the invasion of privacy, the spreading of false reports, and various scarcely concealed varieties of blackmail—would be greatly reduced if they were made misdemeanors, and even more radically reduced if the aggrieved parties were given adequate civil remedies by statute. We have more different criminal laws than any other civilized people and the penalties they carry are greater than are heard of anywhere else, but all the while our statutes against libel remain the loosest and most useless in the world. Even so, they would be infinitely more effective if they were not so badly crippled by the interference of the bad lawyers who sit upon our benches—most of them extremely sensitive to newspaper attack. These promoted shysters have polluted the law of libel with so many ifs and buts that it is now practically impossible for an aggrieved citizen to get substantial damages from a powerful newspaper. His own lawyer is commonly afraid to push his case, even within the limits of the emasculated law. He is lucky, indeed, if he gets off without having judge and district attorney join in railroading him to jail on some false charge in order to curry favor with the defendant.

One of the worst of all the offenses habitually committed by American newspapers, as everyone knows, is that of publishing prejudgments, often on manufactured evidence, in criminal proceedings. This habit is responsible for such gross miscarriages of justice as were witnessed in the Mooney and

Sacco-Vanzetti cases. It is a great folly to try to put down such practises by adopting codes of ethics. The ethical point involved is incomprehensible to the editor who offends; if he had any sensitiveness in the matter he could not be an editor. But an adequate remedy exists, and it is clearly in the hands of the judges. In every state in the United States they have an unquestionable right to prohibit absolutely the publication of all such speculative and inflammatory matter, and to enforce their prohibitions by fines and imprisonment. Now and then an unusually courageous judge exercises this right, always to the benefit of public order and the equitable administration of the laws. But most judges are too eager for newspaper favor to do so. They permit irresponsible (and often far from disinterested) newspapers to convert trials before them into obscene farces. Worse, large numbers of them are not above letting these same newspapers influence their own decisions and sentences. A judge, thus viewed, is simply a lawyer who has passed beyond the jurisdiction of his professional code, and submitted himself to external domination. In brief, he is a lawyer who has lost honor.

The same considerations which make it impossible for a journalistic code of ethics to be formulated and enforced also make it impossible for such a code to be adopted and respected by American pedagogues. The pedagogue, like the newspaper editor, is a professional man who is not his own man; he may be deprived of his livelihood at any moment, with or without reason, by laymen who are unable to comprehend his professional difficulties and temptations and are quite without any concern for his professional honor. Thus he stands on a plane below the lawyer and the physician, and even below the dentist, the horse-doctor and the trained nurse. The fact explains the generally low status, both professionally and as men, of American pedagogues. Academic freedom, in the European sense, is almost unknown in America, save in a few universities, *e. g.*, the Johns Hop-

kins, that started out as frank imitations of European models. Elsewhere even the most learned and dignified professor is wholly at the mercy of a board of trustees which is indistinguishable, in its concepts of professional competence and honor, from the board of directors of a bank or the governors of a Rotary Club. In the state universities these trustees are third-rate politicians; in the seminaries on private foundations they are bankers, street railway officials and newspaper editors, or, if they represent the alumni, former football players. Imagining a Jowett, a Karl Ludwig or a Johannes Müller to arise in America, such simians would have full power to determine his rank and pay, and even to command him in the most delicate matters of professional honor.

§ 15

Golf.—A little onion chased by a big one.

§ 16

The Critical Art in Ku Kluxia.—From the Dallas (Tex.) *News* of January 3:

Pearl Wallace Chappell read from the work of Karl Wilson Baker, of Nacogdoches, recognized as *one of the foremost of living poets*.

§ 17

Theme for a Popular Song.—Good, Bad, Good-evening; Bad, Bad, Good-night; And She Named the Baby Oswald.

§ 18

Further Impressions.—1. Only ignorant persons seek intelligence in their companions after dark.

2. The mob thinks in terms of that one of its members who has the loudest voice and the softest head.

3. Designation of a well-known Belgian poet: Emile Fürherren.

4. To be thoroughly religious, one must be sorely disappointed.

5. I am a happy and contented man. Therefore, I often act in ways and do things that others less fortunate than I consider unseemly and foolish.

6. The wisest thing I have read this month is by E. W. Howe. It is: "Don't pay too much attention to my grumbling about the young: I am old, and possibly unreliable in that sort of criticism." I pass it along, with my compliments, to Dr. Brander Matthews.

7. I wonder why it is that male authors who are excessively homely almost invariably excel in descriptions of beautiful women?

8. Marriage is the reward that women graciously withhold from the men they have truly loved.

9. To be doubtful of many things, but never of one's self — such is the philosophy of success.

10. If Christ came to Chicago, He wouldn't be one-tenth so flabbergasted as would George Washington were he to come to Washington, D. C.

11. The Irish are Germans suffering from spontaneous combustion.

12. I never think of Grover Cleveland that I don't think of King Edward VII. They had many qualities in common. Both were charming personalities; both were men who smiled amiably upon the world; both took themselves with the same pleasant measure of unimportance; both were quietly forceful and ever tolerant; both were picturesque; both dictated to others as they would have dictated to themselves; both were free from bosh; both were gentlemen.

§ 19

Metamorphosis. — Those things at which a man jests have sometimes the curious trick of becoming his subsequent stoutest faiths.



La Femme

By Miriam Gerstle

"COME!" said a Bitter Sorrow to a woman.

"Wait but a moment," she answered, "until I find a face powder that will make me look paler, and change my jade necklace for a plain gold cross."

"Now I am ready," she said, reaching out her hand, and the two moved off together, the woman weeping deeply, in terrible, thick sobs. . . .



Still Waters

By John Russell McCarthy

THERE foams the sea for far adventuring,
And here a river like a noisy guide
Will show you wonders growing by its side;
And in the hills are brooks for wandering.

But when you would be friends with mysteries
Or find in dreams a mirror of the sky,
Go and be lonely where still waters lie
Secure and nameless under shadowy trees.



A CLEVER woman is one who shows her wisdom, and a wise woman one who conceals her cleverness.



Over the Telephone

By Aldous Huxley

(Author of "Chrome Yellow," "Mortal Coils," etc.)

I

THE telephone in Walter Traill's flat stood on a table by the bed.

For one who spent so much of his time in bed, who did, in fact, most of his work there (for Walter, who wrote poetry, found that inspiration flowed most freely between nine o'clock and noon, when one was lying very tranquil and warm under the quilts, only stirring from time to time to light another cigarette), this was certainly the best place for the telephone to stand. One could do one's business, he used to explain with that curious avoidance of the first person singular which always characterized his conversation, one could make one's arrangements for the evening without interrupting the flow of one's inspiration, which always became congealed in an instant if one had to get up and run about in the cold. Yes, the telephone by the bed was a great convenience, was, indeed, for Walter an absolute necessity.

Inspiration this morning was not flowing at all easily. Since his waking, nearly three hours ago, he had produced no more than two and a half octosyllables:

*Under the golden-fruited vine
Androgyne with androgyne
Languidly sports. . . .*

Ten words in a hundred and sixty minutes; that was not very good going. He had felt distracted the whole morning; had been unable to keep his attention fixed. Whenever he tried to

proceed with the octosyllables, he could think only of Hermione Burges. And when, despairingly, he had turned to the crackling pages of the *Times*, it was in vain that he tried to take an interest in the political situation. Hermione's face floated between his eyes and the oracular sentences.

It was a disquieting face, like the face of one of those lovely and dangerous princesses of the Renaissance—but touched with something that wasn't at all Italian, something that was almost Oriental, Chinese. She had that high-domed forehead of the early Renaissance portraits, those waxen eyelids like the petals of a magnolia, that white skin drawn taut and smooth over the bones. But the eyes were long and a little tilted; the mouth, too, did not quite conform to the old Italian ideal. It was wider, it was fuller; not so beautiful in itself, perhaps, but lending the face that odd perverse beauty touched with ugliness which was only Hermione's.

And then the way she dressed, the way she did her hair! Walter abandoned the *Times* to think only of that pale smooth hair, pulled sleekly back from the forehead, twisted in spiral plaits over either ear; think of nothing but those incredibly subtle clothes of hers, so simple, so ingenuous looking and making, like that schoolgirlish hair, so perverse a contrast with the face that, young and fresh in appearance as they, was yet the face of an old Pope's daughter, of a tyrant's ruthless mistress—subtle and dangerous and calmly, provocatively sensual.

Walter sighed and tried to revert his attention to the octosyllables.

*Under the golden-fruited vine
Androgyne with androgyne
Languidly sports. . . .*

Perhaps "toys" would be better than "sports." But it was no good even trying to think about his poem. He felt desperately lonely and unhappy. He was oppressed by a sense of physical emptiness, as though he had not eaten for hours. Desire had reached such a pitch that it began to rhyme, when he thought of the word, with the prophet Isaiah. Desaiiah, desaiiah—oh, the yearning in that long, long diphthong!

Making a determined effort, Walter once more picked up the *Times*. If the leader page was unreadable, perhaps he might find some pleasure and distraction among the theatrical criticisms and the reviews of music. He turned back to the page of the arts. Monsieur Vladimir Philipescu's rendering of Chopin had been exceedingly sensitive. At the Shaftesbury Theatre that veteran actress, Miss Fanny Trumball, had given her usual brilliant impersonation of an ingénue; the play, however, was a little worse than usual. Clearly, there was nothing to hold his attention here. His wandering eye traveled across the page to the theatrical advertisements.

"Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Tonight, *Madame Butterfly*. Wednesday, *Meistersinger*. . . . Friday, *Parsifal*."

"Parsifal"—he had heard Hermione Burges speak of "Parsifal." It seemed somehow very anomalous, but she actually liked Wagner, got genuinely enthusiastic when she talked about him.

"I like his splendor" (he tried to remember her words and the way they were spoken, with excessive emphasis alternating with breathless syllables, faded and shrunk away to nothing). "I like his *richness* and his *life* and his *sensuality*. . . ."

Strange, Walter reflected, these extraordinary aberrations of taste. But

suppose now one were to make some use of "Parsifal." . . .

He lay back on his pillows for a little, pondering. Then, suddenly decided, he reached for the telephone book. He would ask her to go with him to "Parsifal" on Friday. Aylmer . . . Badger . . . Bateman . . . Beale. . . . He turned rapidly over the pages of the directory. Knowing her as little as he did—he had met her once at Rumbelow's, had been two or three times, with a crowd, to her Thursday evening parties—he would have to have some sort of an excuse for asking her. Big-ham . . . Bilberry . . . Bosanquet. . . . He'd say that somebody had given him a box for "Parsifal" and that as he'd heard her talking so enthusiastically about Wagner at Rumbelow's—no, better not mention Rumbelow, damn the man!—he had thought that perhaps she would care to share it with one, don't you know. Dinner first; very early one would have to make it. Should one say the Savoy? It was close to the theatre.

Yes, that was the line to take. The box would have to have been given to him; it would be an impertinence to have bought it specially for her, on the strength of what was really so slight an acquaintance. Boswell . . . Bubb Boddington . . . Bumpus . . . Bun-yan . . . Burdett . . . Burge . . . Burges, Burges, Burges, Mrs. T. R. Burges—there she was. Langham, double two three two.

He put out his hand and drew the telephone toward him, but he did not lift the receiver at once. He had caught sight of himself—a pale face under a mop of dark hair—in the long glass of the wardrobe door.

One wasn't precisely, he reflected looking at the image, a Greek god. One had even been told, as a child, as an adult too, that one looked like a sick monkey. Not that that was a valid reason why she shouldn't like one. Sick monkeys were pathetic, oh! heart-rendingly so. Some women liked it; it was a pleasant change from the bluff, rough, gruff, tough sort of business.

Ruby Dicks, for example, she had liked it—too much by half. He had made love to her in pure absence of mind, pathetically; and she had adored him with frenzy, still did. He shrugged up his shoulders, shuddering, at the recollection, shut his eyes, shook his head. It had been too awful.

But the question was, now, whether Hermione would appreciate the sick monkey. The rough gruff toughs, the brasses and the asses were more in her line.

It was a queer thing, but she had never, so far as he knew, liked anyone who wasn't perfectly awful, anyone who wasn't in some way or other a monster. Unerringly, by some sort of instinct, she always picked them out from among the whole range of her male acquaintance—unerringly—and she knew plenty of charming people too. One's self, for example. These extraordinary, unfathomable women! That one could be so intelligent and such a fool; that one could be a Renaissance princess, calm and clear-sighted and dangerous, and yet be taken in by any clown or any adventurer who chose to present himself; that one could be Hermione Burges and the mistress of Bob Rumbelow—it was past all understanding.

And what was so odd, she never seemed to learn by experience. (Walter had known her legend, peeped at odd angles into her world long before he had actually known her.) Experience does it, as the Romans used to say; but we Anglo-Saxons know that it doesn't. First, there had been that blackguard Burges. She had actually married him . . . when it was palpable to any child that the man was a bully and a rogue. She had separated from Burges after eighteen months. And then she had got entangled with Diamantopoulos, the nimble Greek. If only she had read the *Æneid*, she'd have known that it is wise to fear Greeks, even when they bring presents. Not that Diamantopoulos, according to all accounts, had brought many presents; he had more often borrowed

twenty pounds. And then, after seeing through the Greek, she had been able to find no better successor than fat old Bob Rumbelow, the journalist—genial enough in his way, no doubt, but a bounder, a buffoon and so childishly vain that he would go through any clown's trick for the sake of a little laughter or applause. Was Rumbelow her idea of the intellectual, the genius? What a joke, what a calamity!

And now, Walter wondered, his hand still resting on the telephone, his eyes still vacantly fixed on his own pathetic and blue-pajamaed image, would she so much as be aware of the existence of anyone so different—so well-bred so (in all modesty) fundamentally decent—as himself? These women were so incomprehensible, so insane, their values were so fantastically topsy-turvy; it seemed hopeless even to try and make her aware.

II

HE withdrew his hand from the telephone. But the image of Hermione, smiling her lovely and dangerous smile, and dressed as he had seen her at Rumbelow's in the austere little suit of black cloth with something that looked like a boy's cricket shirt showing underneath the coat . . . Hermione, doubly formidable and beautiful in this absurdly ingenuous disguise, appeared so vividly before his inward eye that he quickly reached out once more for the instrument.

After all, perhaps one might be a blackguard or a buffoon all the time, without knowing it. Or perhaps one might be able to cultivate blackguardism. A coating of brass on the face, a swagger, an assurance . . . these things went a long way. Charlatanism added to merit is like a nought added to a figure . . . multiplies it by ten. Wise old Stendhal! With a little practice, surely one could learn to add that nought.

He wouldn't say, for example, that the box at Covent Garden had been given him. That would be a confes-

sion of weakness. He would just ring her up, airily, out of the blue, and say: "One has bought a box for 'Parsifal' . . . for you, because you like Wagner (which is more than one does oneself.) Will you come? Dinner first . . . Friday . . . and a sandwich at one's poor rooms on the way home."

Yes, crudely, baldly, boldly, he would just say it like that.

He lifted the receiver and applied it resolutely to his ear. "Parsifal," he reflected, as he listened through the buzzing chaos for a sign of life from the exchange, "Parsifal" was the ideal entertainment for the present occasion. It would surely have been difficult to find anything more richly luscious in any of the London theatres. The Grail Music in the first act, for example, and the Good Friday Music in the third. . . .

"Number, please."

"Langham, Double two three two."

"D o u b l e two thr-r-ree two, Lang. . . ." The voice cut itself short and Walter was left alone once more with the buzzing chaos.

There was nothing to equal the direct appeal of this sort of erotic religiosity. Rows and rows of full blown tights at the Folies Bergères were no match for "Parsifal." When one was seventeen one had been positively overwhelmed by it. Critically, intellectually, Hermione was still seventeen. Seventeen in mind and twenty-seven in body . . . the effect of Parsifal upon her should be something terrific. The eyes would be very brilliant under the magnolia-petal lids, there would be a flush over the cheek-bones as she stepped out, at the opera's end, under the portico at Covent Garden. And he, still revolted by the vulgarity of the music, but all on fire with excited anticipation—he would be jostling about in the crowd, looking for the car. Quick, quick! These precious emotions evaporate, stale on the cold air like perfumes in an unstoppered phial.

Quickly, quietly, they'd go sizzling along the lamplit streets. There she'd be, leaning back in the car beside him,

seen only in flashes as they passed the lamps . . . a succession of brief and lovely revelations. He wouldn't say anything. Or would he? Walter was inclined to think he wouldn't. Accidentally, perhaps, he might touch her arm, her hand.

"Have you had any reply?" the voice inquired across the chaos.

"Not yet," said Walter.

"I'll ring them again."

In his rooms everything would have been carefully prepared. There would be caviar and a variety of sandwiches and a bottle or two. The light would be shining up, from a single lamp, on to his Post-Impressionist Odalisque and she would inquire as soon as they crossed the threshold: "What's that picture?" And he'd say, casually: "Oh, that's my Matisse." And she'd be tremendously impressed. No, on second thoughts, she probably wouldn't be impressed at all; she would never have heard of Matisse. It would be better, perhaps, to have the light shining on nothing in particular.

There was suddenly a very definite click. Walter's heart seemed to drop with a bump on a hard pavement; he pressed the receiver closer to his ear. A loud shrill voice said "Hullo."

"Is that Mrs. Burges's?" he asked.

"Who?"

"Mrs. Burges's house. Langham, Double two three two?"

"Wrong number," said the voice with ill-temper.

Walter got through to the exchange and repeated the number. Left alone once more with the buzzing, he pictured her as she would be, that Friday evening, in his rooms. He saw her, lying back in the deep sofa, still flushed, still bright eyed with the intoxication of the music; and perhaps the wine would have helped a little. One would hear her softy humming the notes of the chime.

And then, somehow (it was rather difficult to picture the transition between the last scene and this), quite suddenly, one would be kissing her—kissing her with passion, her mouth,

her tight-lidded eyes, her arms, her breast. And she would lie there in his arms, faintly, remotely smiling, as though from some other world. And they would both be happy.

Hermione's voice was suddenly in his ears.

"Hulo-o"

It was an unmistakeable voice, a little husky and having a curious chanting intonation.

"Is that Mrs. Burges?" he managed to ask. He found himself horribly embarrassed, taken aback.

"Speaking," said the hoarse sweet voice. "Who are you?"

"This is Walter Traill."

"How nice! Good morning, Mr. Traill!"

"Good morning," said Walter. "I rang up," he went on, stammering, tumbling over his words. He had forgotten all he meant so boldly and confidently to say. "That is, I wondered if you could come, if you'd care to come, I mean—to the opera—'Parsifal,' you know—next Friday. One has been given a box, you see. And knowing how much you liked Wagner, one wondered. . . ."

His voice trailed away into silence. This wasn't at all what he had intended to say. A nought after the figure? Or a decimal point before?

"I couldn't quite catch." Her voice sounded a puzzled note. "Did you say something about 'Parsifal'?"

"On Friday," Walter repeated. "One has a box. Thought you might care to make use of it, don't you know."

"That was *too* kind of you, Mr. Traill." She made the common phrases of politeness so warm, so richly resonant! "How charming of you to think of me!"

"One remembered what you said about Wagner at Rumbel. . . ." No, one mustn't mention that grotesque and hated name . . . the other day at lunch, you know."

"How *nice* of you! I should have *loved* to come. But, alas, on Friday. . . ."

Despairingly, Walter took the receiver from his ear. The voice squeaked away impotently into the air like the ghost of a Punch and Judy show. He could catch an occasional word: ". . . so kind . . . so sorry . . . boring engagement . . . good-bye." Then the squeaking ceased; there was silence.

Pushing the telephone away, Walter lay back on his pillow. He had never felt so unhappy in his life before; he could have sobbed aloud.



La Comédie Humaine

By *W. E. Sampson*

THE theatre is not the only place where it is necessary to discount for the time being our sense of reality, of plain hard fact, in order to enter into the illusion and take the drama seriously.

We have to do it when sitting in the gallery of the United States Senate. We have to do it when attending the funeral of a wealthy green-grocer. We have to do it when reading poetry. We have to do it when falling in love. . . .



The New Régime

By F. Gregory Hartswick

WHEN, as must inevitably happen presently, I shall be called upon to assume the dictatorship of the world, I shall adopt a carefully-thought-out plan of action toward the equally inevitable dissenting groups, revolutionists of one sort or other, champions of the proletariat and other trouble-makers who will begin plotting against my eminently equitable rule shortly after I mount the throne. My predecessors have always been plagued by these gentry, and have taken measures against them which, while successful in squelching certain individuals, have actually strengthened the causes which those individuals represented rather than weakening them. I refer, of course, to the time-honored practice of making martyrs of any luckless rebels who might come into the clutches of the royal secret service. The mistake these early dictators made was in the manner of their punishments. They tossed victims to the lions, they burned them or performed other culinary operations on them, they crucified them, they guillotined them, they shot them down. Their fundamental error lay in the fact that these deaths, while decidedly unpleasant, gave unparalleled opportunity for

a dignified, even a noble, parting gesture. The act of kneeling in prayer before the dripping jaws of wild beasts, the presence of hushed thousands to listen to effective last words delivered from amidst the curling smoke of the funeral pyre, the contemptuous pinch of snuff just before one's head was inserted through the little window—what cause would not be hallowed and gain new and eager recruits when its martyrs thus magnificently divested themselves of this mortal coil?

When a rebel shall be haled into my presence I shall treat him thus: I shall fill him full of equal parts of Fish-House Punch and Od-fashioned Whiskey cocktails, smear his face, except the nose, with soot, and toss him, clad in nothing but a suit of ladies' pink silk unmentionables, into a mortarbed. Motion-picture cameras shall record his antics, and the films shall be shown everywhere; and presently there will be no voice raised against me. That cause is lost which guarantees that its unfortunates shall be food for the guffaws of ten hundred million mouzhiks. That régime is as surely lost which by the chastisement meted out to its opponents canonizes them.



WHEN a woman is talking, a man looks at her eyes. When she stops talking, he looks at her lips.



Dead-wood

By Oscar Graeve

I
SHE stood timidly poised on the curb at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street. The traffic dismayed her. For the last year or two, it seemed, automobiles had frightened her much more than ever before. It wasn't, of course, that she was getting old . . . everybody said that the torrent of traffic had become appalling.

She stood there waiting for the policeman to see her and escort her across. He often did that. He was a very nice policeman. She admired his huge shoulders, the white flash of his smile, his buoyant air of command. She had always admired large, handsome men, no matter what their social status might be. She wasn't like some of her friends who could never see anything nice about common people.

Miss Brooke, fortunately, was not in a hurry. Perhaps she should have been, but she felt tremendously reluctant about appearing at her office this morning. She didn't know just why.

"It's just as if I had a premonition," she said to herself, and added indignantly, "It's silly, too. Especially for me, when I've always said courage, in man or woman, was the finest thing one could have."

Yet she felt about the office somewhat as she felt about the traffic. The firm for which she was a saleswoman, a firm of interior decorators, had grown so large, was moving forward so swiftly and irresistibly, that, like the traffic, she felt that some day it might run completely over her.

Not that Mr. Crowder and Mr. Snyder, the heads of the firm, were not gra-

cious to her. In the years she had worked for Crowder & Snyder, Incorporated, the two gentlemen had always been very gracious.

"Gracious" was a favorite word of Miss Brooke's. She would come back from an attempt to make a sale to some rich woman to whom the firm had sent her and while she would often be compelled to acknowledge failure, she would always end up by saying, with a little toss of her head, "No; but Mrs. Darlington was very gracious to me. Nobody could have been more gracious! Of course she knows who my cousins, the Reginald Marshes, are."

Of late, Miss Brooke had been compelled to report an extraordinary number of failures. Even she had been forced to admit that the firm, recently, had not been altogether as gracious as one might wish.

After the nice policeman had seen her safely across Fifth Avenue, Miss Brooke fell to thinking how happy and satisfactory life had been three or four years ago. Three or four years ago, Miss Brooke had had almost two thousand dollars in the savings bank. But she had made an unwise investment. Most of the two thousand had been swept away. And the rest had dribbled away, like drops from a leaky faucet, because things, ever since the war, had cost so much more; and also because her sales commissions had seemed to decrease each year.

How ardently Miss Brooke wished that she had her two thousand dollars back! The interest on the money, of course, was not enough to support her. But the money itself was enough to give

her some margin of safety if her firm, in its new and glittering success, did decide to run over her, tell her her services were no longer required. The two thousand dollars would mean a great deal, a very great deal, while Miss Brooke looked around for something else. The thought that now she had no margin of safety, none at all, was so terrifying that it came upon Miss Brooke sometimes as a cold sweat—pardon, perspiration—comes upon one sometimes at night.

II

THE shop of Crowder & Snyder, Inc., in Madison Avenue, tries its best to disguise the fact that it is a shop. The gilt lettering announcing *Crowder & Snyder, Inc.—New York and Paris—Interior Decorating* is tucked away in the remotest corner of the plate-glass window and is in the tiniest sort of refined gilt lettering. Behind the plateglass window and in front of canary-colored taffeta curtains which effectively shut off the gaze of the vulgar, stands a single Louis Quatorze chair over which an antique Persian embroidery is thrown with artful carelessness.

Miss Brooke disregarded the plate-glass window and the shop entrance beside it, and entered the other entrance which leads upstairs to the offices of Crowder & Snyder. She swept inside with a polite nod to the man who sat at the first desk—the desk from which visitors were announced. She walked in a stately manner to her own desk at the rear of the office. Not for worlds would she have betrayed to the office force—the clerks, the stenographers, the other salesmen and saleswomen—the doubts that consumed her, the premonition that whispered to her, the worries that buzzed like stinging wasps about her.

Her manner, a blend of dignity and sweetness, was the manner of one born to the purple—to which, indeed, all the Brookes had been born until certain follies, paralleled by Miss Brooke's own

folly as an investor, but on a much grander scale.

Miss Brooke had thought:

"Now, wouldn't it be nice if there were a letter on my desk from someone saying they wanted their house done over completely."

But there was no letter of that kind. There was no letter of any kind. Miss Brooke removed her simple but very smart hat and her cape—capes had come in again that season—and laid them on the desk beside her. She wanted to give the impression that she must immediately sail forth again on urgent business. And of course there was no reason why the office force should know that there was no urgent business. Mr. Crowder might know. Mr. Snyder might know. And the bookkeeper. But there was no reason why anyone else should know.

Miss Brooke's attitude toward the office force was peculiar. It had come to her, in the subtle way that such things do come, that the office force considered her antiquated, a back number, even a little ridiculous. She resented this attitude fiercely. She despised the office force. She told herself what they thought didn't make any difference to her. . . . And she would have given anything she possessed to change their attitude.

Yet they realized that she was a lady. They knew who the Brookes were—or had been. They certainly knew all about the Reginald Marshes. And they treated Miss Brooke with respect. Perhaps they treated her with too much respect. She was always imagining that they were saying things behind her back. She was always imagining that, behind her back, they were laughing at her and her slow, refined nods and her gracious manner.

Miss Brooke wondered sometimes if it paid to be a lady. She had seen women who were not ladies and men who most decidedly were not gentlemen make such great successes. She had seen it right here in the offices of Crowder & Snyder. She had even

experienced a certain admiration for their ability. But not for the life of her could she emulate their example. She simply could not "drive home a sale"—an expression she had heard them use. If a person to whom she tried to sell something didn't want that something she could not persist in urging it upon the person. She had been brought up to be mild, polite, forbearing. She could not change. It was too late. And although she did not admit it, she knew that she would not change if she could. Miss Brooke had her standards—the standards of a lady. She sometimes felt that she would rather die than abandon them.

She felt sometimes, too, that she would sell her soul—granted such a thing were salable—if she could walk out of this office some afternoon and never return again.

Meanwhile, with ostentatious industry, she was running through a little case in which were filed a number of cards. The case was labeled in her own thin, ladylike handwriting, "Customers—Miss Brooke." Customers! She went through the entire case without receiving an idea of even one customer who would give her a little custom. Yet in the past she had not fared so badly with these old friends and distant relatives. Why had the springs of their custom dried up? Was she entirely too antiquated to secure their business except for a crumb now and then which, they took no pains to hide, they threw her for old times' sake?

She had gone through the cards and was sitting there listlessly, a queer little fear fluttering within her, when a neat office girl appeared.

"Miss Brooke, Mr. Snyder would like to see you in his office."

Miss Brooke smiled her best smile. "Yes, of course. Tell him just a minute."

She delayed purposely, dashing through the cards again. Then she rose with dignity, and in her stateliest manner marched toward Mr. Snyder's office. Her thoughts, absurdly enough, went to a certain queen on her way to the

guillotine. So Marie Antoinette had looked as she had gone to her doom—so, at least, Miss Brooke hoped she had looked.

III

MR. SNYDER sat at his desk—a dapper, scrupulously neat man with eyeglasses, waxed moustaches, and wings of overlong grayish hair brushed straight back over thin ears. He did not rise. For a moment he did not even look up. Then he did glance up with a birdlike twist of his head, smiled mechanically and said:

"Oh, yes! Miss Brooke! Will you sit down?"

Miss Brooke sat down. From the gone feeling at the pit of her stomach she knew that her premonition had come but too true.

Mr. Snyder swung round, balancing the fingers of one hand against the fingers of the other—well-kept fingers, thin, with pointed, highly polished nails.

"Oh, Miss Brooke—yes!" — Mr. Snyder, it seemed, had difficulty in going on. Finally, his words burst through his hesitation like bullets through a thin silk screen. "Well, to put it plainly, Miss Brooke, we're thinking of cutting down expenses."

So it had come! Miss Brooke sat there as if his words had indeed been bullets—bullets that had struck her dumb. But presently, despite the tight feeling in her throat, she managed to say:

"You mean I'm no longer required—?"

Mr. Snyder held up his hand.

"Now don't go too fast, Miss Brooke. Mr. Crowder and myself appreciate you have been with the firm a great many years and, in the past, have done very valuable service. But—well, we're compelled to clear out a lot of dead-wood—"

"Dead-wood, Mr. Snyder!"

"No; pardon me. That's the wrong word. I withdraw that word, Miss Brooke. No offense meant, I assure you. No, Mr. Crowder and myself

appreciate your years of excellent work, but—well, conditions are changing. Competition is so much keener. There are a hundred interior decorators today where there were ten when—you came with us. And it isn't everybody who can stand this new pace, Miss Brooke. Both Mr. Crowder and myself understand that. So we thought some arrangement might be made—"

How she hated him! She had never liked Mr. Snyder. She had never liked any dapper little men with waxed moustaches and highly-polished fingernails. Give her a big, handsome man. Her thoughts flew in a frenzy of admiration to her nice policeman. There was a man for you! But she had liked Mr. Crowder. He was a gentleman. Mr. Crowder would never have talked this way to her. Dead-wood! But then she was shrewd enough to realize that perhaps it was because Mr. Crowder could not talk to her in this way that he had, as the expression goes, wished it on the more callous Mr. Snyder.

Presently she forced herself to ask:

"What sort of an arrangement, Mr. Snyder?"

"Well, to be perfectly frank, a pension, Miss Brooke. That's only fair after your years of service. Of course it won't be as big as we'd like it to be. Business hasn't been so awfully good—but I suppose you have some resources of your own."

"Resources?" Her throat closed on the word.

"Some savings at least—and then your relatives are very wealthy."

"My cousins?"

"Yes, the Reginald Marshes. We value their custom and their friendship very much. We wouldn't like to offend them in any way, Miss Brooke. And besides it's only right about the pension. That added to your own resources—"

Desperately she started to tell him that she had nothing. The little she had disappeared as utterly as if it had been dropped into a bottomless pit. But suddenly she realized that she couldn't tell him. She couldn't! She was a lady. At least she had the pride a lady

is supposed to have. She could not, she simply could not, throw herself upon his mercy. So, instead of telling him she had no resources, she found herself saying something quite the opposite. She found herself asking:

"Wouldn't—wouldn't accepting a pension be like accepting charity, Mr. Snyder?"

He waved his hands.

"Nonsense! Nonsense, Miss Brooke! It would be like something you'd earned through years of work—just as if it were back pay coming to you."

Miss Brooke clasped her hands.

"But, Mr. Snyder—oh, I'd so much rather earn what you can pay me! I know my record lately hasn't been so good, although there was that order I brought in to do over the Marsh dining-room when we had to send to Italy for the furniture—"

"Yes, a very nice order, Miss Brooke, but wasn't that some time ago?"

"Yes, a few months ago."

"Wasn't it over a year ago?"

"Yes; yes, it was, Mr. Snyder, now that you recall it. But I'm admitting I haven't brought in much business of late but couldn't I work inside instead of outside. I mean couldn't I sell in the shop downstairs?"

Mr. Snyder reflected.

"Well—" he began, and stopped.

Miss Brooke knew why he had stopped. Downstairs in the shop there were only young men salesmen—ingratiating young men with distinguished manners, faultless clothes and superb aplomb. No, she couldn't go down in the shop. What a mad suggestion to make! She knew why Mr. Snyder hesitated. She knew what he was thinking. She prayed that he would not say what he was thinking. And Mr. Snyder did have the grace to remain quiet.

Then Miss Brooke said to this man whom she had always disliked:

"Why not give me another chance, Mr. Snyder, before—before we settle on the pension? I would so much rather make the money myself. I mean, let me keep going on a little longer.

There are two or three old friends who, I know, will want some work done soon. I've just been going through my card file and—and I realized it was high time that I called upon a number of old friends. Couldn't you let me go on a little longer?"

Mr. Snyder held his head on one side, held it on the other side.

"Well, maybe we could . . . yes, perhaps we could, Miss Brooke. Things do look a little brighter now that fall is here and people are coming back to town. Yes, perhaps we should wait and see—say for two months or so."

She breathed again. Two months. Two months' reprieve!

She rose and bowed slightly from the waist. "Thank you. I'll—I'll do my best."

"I'm sure you will, Miss Brooke. Yes, I'm sure you will. He dismissed her with a wave of his hand.

Before pushing his office door open, however, Miss Brooke hesitated for a moment. A smile suddenly appeared upon her face.

"Courage, Carolyn!" she whispered. "They'll all be looking at you when you come out. They must not know what this interview was about. Courage!"

With icy hands and dry lips but with a smile that was meant to suggest that she and Mr. Snyder had just shared a delicious jest, Miss Brooke stepped forth again into the outer office.

IV

THAT evening Miss Brooke decided to run over and see her cousin, Mrs. Reginald Marsh. It was unusual for her to call upon her cousin without a special invitation. But this call was for a very justifiable reason. And, after all, Evelyn Marsh was her own first cousin.

There was no reason why Evelyn should be ashamed of her. In the security of her little room on the top floor of a select rooming house in West 72d Street, Miss Brooke drew forth her black lace dinner dress and gazed at it approvingly. Miss Brooke was one of

those who always believe in dressing for dinner. It is true that she could rarely put this belief into practice. To dress for dinner when one usually snatched dinner at any inexpensive little tearoom seemed foolish even to Miss Brooke. Nevertheless she believed in it.

"It tones one up for the evening, creates a different atmosphere from that of the workaday world," Miss Brooke told herself.

Long ago, when she had dreamed of having a little apartment of her own, dressing for dinner every evening was to be one of its most firmly established rites. But the little apartment had never emerged from that nebulous realm in which dreams are made.

But tonight, although she had already stopped at a tearoom for a pot of tea and a shrimp patty—shrimps are so much less expensive and really so much more tasty than chicken—Miss Brooke arrayed herself in her black lace dinner dress.

There was no reason why Evelyn should know that she didn't dress for dinner every night. Nor any reason why Evelyn should be ashamed of her appearance. The black lace dinner dress, Miss Brooke felt, was very good style. It looked, she assured herself, as if it had come from Fifth Avenue instead of Sixth.

Another of Miss Brooke's unwritten laws was that it always paid to buy the best. "Fewer clothes but better clothes" was her motto. The thing that had good quality to start with was always most economical in the long run. She had no patience with people who constantly bought a succession of frippery stuff that lasted only a week or two.

She regretted that she could not wear her black satin slippers. But they were out of the question. For the Reginald Marsh house was on the East Side while her own select rooming-house was on the West. She had to walk across the Park to get to the Marshes'. But over her black lace dinner dress she threw a black silk evening wrap ("Seven years old, my dear, but, hon-

estly, would you know it?") and over her carefully dressed hair, a black lace scarf and, after that, she felt that she looked perfectly all right. No, there was no reason why Evelyn should be ashamed of her.

Although Miss Brooke had had a lifelong acquaintance with butlers, for some reason, the Reginald Marshes' butler always awed her a little. He was such a butlerish butler. His manner achieved a combination of sleek servility and extreme hauteur.

"Is Mrs. Marsh at home?" Miss Brooke asked in the voice she reserved exclusively for use on him—a voice that was meant to tell him bluntly that she had talked with butlers all her life and that no butler could frighten her.

The butlerish butler frowned as if a question of state had been laid before him.

"I don't know, Miss Brooke," he said finally, "I'll see, Miss Brooke."

"Tell her it's I."

The butler raised his eyebrows.

"Of course, Miss Brooke. That is, if she is at home."

Miss Brooke waited in the small ante-room into which all callers of unknown purpose or uncertain antecedents were shown.

After a minute or two, the butler returned.

"Yes, Mrs. Marsh is at home, Miss Brooke. She's in her own room, Miss Brooke. She wishes to know if you will come right up."

Miss Brooke nodded and whisked lightly up the stairs. Lightheartedly, too. She was exhilarated with her victory over the butler. He might at least have let her wait in some other place than the ante-room. After all, she was a member of the family.

Mrs. Reginald Marsh was rouging her lips before the mirror of her dressing-table. She half-turned, the lipstick still suspended in her hand.

"Oh, Carolyn, I'm in such a rush. I always am, aren't I? Did you notice if the car's outside?"

"I don't think so, Evelyn."

"Well, then, I can give you a minute.

What time is it anyway? I'm always hurrying, yet I'm always late."

Miss Brooke found that she couldn't tell her cousin what she had come to tell her. She couldn't tell her of the affair at the office and how frightened and alone and desperate she felt.

Instead she said:

"Evelyn, I was wondering if there wasn't some work you wanted done for the house now that you're back in town?"

Mrs. Marsh screwed up her eyes at Miss Brooke.

"Why, Carolyn, what a funny time to bring that up—just when I'm in such a tear. Whatever made you bring that up just now, dear?"

"Well, you're always in a tear, Evelyn."

"I know I am. I'm absolutely worn out."

"And things haven't been going so awfully well at the office lately. I thought if you did have something you wanted done it might—"

"Why, my dear! I did give you that order to do over our dining-room—"

"Yes, I know, Evelyn, but that was over a year ago."

"Was it really? It seems only yesterday, and it cost so much, Carolyn."

"Yes, but you liked it."

"I loved it, Carolyn. Well, maybe there is something else. As soon as I get time—"

"And, Evelyn, you're always going to other people's houses. Perhaps you'll run across somebody who may—"

"Oh, Carolyn! I can't do that! I really can't! I never could ask favors of people."

Miss Brooke sighed. She sympathized. It was hard to ask favors of people. Horribly hard sometimes. But, despite her better judgment, she persisted:

"It would be so easy for you just to mention my name, Evelyn . . . I mean, if you saw that there was something to be done—"

Mrs. Marsh's eyes narrowed.

"No, I don't care to *beg*, Carolyn," she said coldly.

Miss Brooke's face flushed a bright red, and then became a curious gray color. She rose.

"Well, I'll run along," she said, in a voice that was gray in color, too, and she did not look at her cousin.

V

THE next morning, however, Miss Brooke received a note from Mrs. Marsh.

"I'm so sorry, Carolyn," she wrote. "Late as I was for that dinner party, I sat right down after you'd gone and wrote this little note to apologize. And here is a check for fifty dollars. For Heaven's sake buy yourself a new evening wrap."

Miss Brooke read the note twice. And examined the check carefully. Then she tore both into tiny bits.

"I haven't come to that," she said to herself grimly.

Miss Brooke, standing at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, waited for the green light to replace the white. The traffic at mid-day was, if anything, worse than in the morning at the hour when, on week-days, she had formerly been on her way to the offices of Crowder & Snyder, Inc. And her nice policeman was no longer stationed there.

She had now, for many days and weeks, been tramping both the East side and the West on her quest to find some work that a lady might be permitted to do. None of the smart shops seemed to have any vacancies. And even the huge department stores with their myriads of workers seemed intent on securing only pert young whipper-snappers as salesladies.

At the same time Miss Brooke had been looking for a new rooming-house. The landlady of the select rooming-house in West 72d Street had been unnecessarily unpleasant since Miss Brooke had fallen a little behind in her payments.

After all, there was no reason why she should have felt so badly when at last she had been forced to accept the

pension from Crowder & Snyder. It was such a small pension. Somehow, she felt that she would have accepted the pension much less willingly if it had been adequate . . . and yet it would be very agreeable to have it adequate. Miss Brooke's thoughts of late had become slightly muddled, her standards a little shredded.

At last, when the green lights in the signal tower replaced the white lights, Miss Brooke crossed Fifth Avenue and walked uptown to 72d Street. She knew that she had no right to stop, so early in the day, from looking for a position and also a cheaper room, but her feet felt as if they would swell through her shoes. And her winter cape was very heavy. It was too bad that spring had brought in three-piece costumes and that capes were no longer worn.

Arriving at her rooming-house she let herself in with her latchkey as quietly as she could. But not quietly enough. She had not been in her room more than two or three minutes when there was a knock on the door.

The landlady filled the doorway. She was rather an impressive landlady with imitation pearl earrings in her ears and a string of pearls, imitation, too, glowing against the black silk of her dress.

"I hate to trouble you again, Miss Brooke," she said, and her aggressive tone made one doubt her hatred, "but I was wondering if you had any good news for me?"

"N-o," said Miss Brooke, "the check I expected from my father's estate hasn't come as yet. But it should be here today or tomorrow. It seems the dividends even on the best stocks and bonds are much smaller than they used to be. You remember, Mrs. Castleton, I always used to be prompt in my payments."

"Yes, but you were working then," said the landlady. "You didn't depend on the checks from your father's estate."

"I'm sure I'll have the money in a day or two, Mrs. Castleton."

"Well, if it's not here by tomorrow

or the next day something will have to be done, Miss Brooke. Yes, something will have to be done," the landlady repeated firmly.

After the landlady had departed, Miss Brooke sighed. Yes, something would have to be done. The trouble was that she didn't know just what that something must be. Long ago, she had decided that she would rather be dead than to be living as she was now. Living! There flashed upon her a memory of her interview with Mr. Snyder on the day when he had first spoken to her about the pension. What was the word he had used? Dead-wood! Yes, that was the word. Well, maybe if one were dead-wood it was right that one should be chopped from the tree of life. But it was rather horrible to be chopped off not quite dead and to be compelled to go on living somehow. It took courage to go on living as best one

could. Courage! She had always admired courage so much.

Well, maybe something would turn up . . . but, meanwhile, all her standards were being dragged in the dust.

Presently Miss Brooke crossed to the little table that stood by the window. From a drawer she pulled forth a sheet of writing paper, an envelope, a pen and a small bottle of ink.

"Dear Evelyn," she wrote, "I wonder if you could favor me with a little—

The pen caught in the paper and sent up a spray of inky blots that scattered all over the letter she was writing.

Miss Brooke bit her lips and tears stung her eyes.

Nevertheless, after a minute or two, she drew forth another sheet of paper. Clutching the pen more firmly, she wrote again, "Dear Evelyn: "I wonder if you could favor me. . . ."



After Sunset

By George Sterling

THERE is no wind to stir the cypress tree.
Amber and chill the lucid sunset sank,
A wine the breathless lips of Evening drank.
Peace is upon the headland and the sea.

The foam but whispers on the fading shore.
Solemn and desolate the ocean lies,
Azure of deeper twilight than the skies'.
The night's enormous house is built once more.

The last, dark gull has left the northern dune—
So clear against the skyline, though so far.
A great, a calm, a slowly westering star
Goes down the heavens with a slender moon.

The shadows of eternity remain,—
The sense of wonder that the stars recall.
Here Beauty everlasting renders all—
Her sorrow that is joy, her holy pain.



The Superior Race

(An Essay)

By *W. E. Burghardt Du Bois*

(Author of "The Suppression of the Slave Trade," "The Souls of Black Folk," "The Negro," "Darkwater," Etc.)

I

WHEN the obsession of his race consciousness leaves him, my white friend is quite companionable; otherwise he is impossible. He has a way of putting an excessive amount of pity in his look and of stating as a general and incontrovertible fact that it is "horrible" to be an Exception. By this he means me. He is more than certain that I prove the rule. He is not a bright person, but of that famous average, standardized and astonished at anything that even seems original. His thesis is simple: The world is composed of Race superimposed on Race; classes superimposed on classes; beneath the whole thing is "Our Family" in capitals, and under that is God. God seems to be a cousin, or at least a blood relative of the Van Diemens.

"Of course," he says, "you know Negroes are inferior."

I admit nothing of the sort, I maintain. In fact, having known with considerable intimacy, both male and female, the people of the British Isles, of Scandinavia, of Russia, of Germany, north and south, of the three ends of France and the two ends of Italy; specimens from the Balkans and black and white Spain; the three great races of Asia and the melange of Africa, without mentioning America, I sit here and maintain that black folk are much the superior of white.

"You are either joking or mad," he says.

Both and neither. This race talk is, of course, a joke, and frequently it has driven me insane and probably will permanently in the future; and yet, seriously and soberly, we black folk are the salvation of mankind.

He regards me with puzzled astonishment and says confidentially:

"Do you know that sometimes I am half afraid that you really believe this? At other times I see clearly the inferiority complex."

The former after lunch, I reply, and the latter before.

"Very well," he says, "let's lunch."

Where? I ask quizzically, we being at the time in the roaring Forties.

"Why—oh, well!—their refusal to serve you lunch at least does not prove your superiority."

Nor yet theirs, I answer; but never mind, come with me to Second Avenue.

We start again with the salad.

"Now, superiority consists of what?" he argues.

Life is, I remark, (1) Beauty and health of body, (2) Mental clearness and creative genius, (3) Spiritual goodness and receptivity, (4) Social adaptability and constructiveness.

"Not bad," he answers. "Not bad at all. Now I contend that the white race conspicuously excels in one, two and four and is well abreast even in three."

And I maintain that the black race

excels in one, three and four and is well abreast in two.

"Sheer nonsense and pure balderdash! Compare the Venus of Milo and the Apollo Belvedere with a Harlem or Beale Street couple."

With a Fifth Avenue Easter parade or a Newport Dance. In short, compare humanity at its best or worst with the Ideal, and humanity suffers. But black folk in most attributes of physical beauty, in line and height and curve, have the same norms as whites and differ only in small details of color, hair and curve of countenance. Now can there be any question but that as colors bronze, mahogany, coffee and gold are far lovelier than pink, gray and marble? Hair is a matter of taste. Some will have it drab and stringy and others in a gray, woven, unmoving mass. Most of us like it somewhere between, in tiny tendrils, smoking curls and sweeping curves. I have loved all these varieties in my day. I prefer the crinkly kind, almost wavy, in black brown and glistening. In faces I hate straight features; needles and razors may be sharp—but beautiful, never.

"All that is personal opinion. I prefer the colors of heaven and day: sunlight hair and blue eyes, and straight noses and thin lips, and that incomparable air of haughty aloofness and aristocracy."

And I, on the contrary, am the child of twilight and night, and choose intricately curly hair, black eyes, full and luscious features, and that air of humility and wonder which streams from moonlight. Add to this, voices that caress instead of rasp, glances that appeal rather than repel, and a sinuous litheness of movement to replace Anglo-Saxon stalking—there you have my ideal. Of course you can bury any human body in dirt and misery and make it horrible. I have seen the East End of London.

"Beauty seems to be simply opinion, if you put it that way."

To be sure. But whose opinion?

"Bother beauty. Here we shall never agree. But, after all, I doubt if it

makes much difference. The real point is Brains: clear thinking, pure reason, mathematical precision and creative genius. Now, without *blague*, stand and acknowledge that here the white race is supreme."

Quite the contrary. I know no attribute in which the white race has more conspicuously failed. This is white and European civilization; and as a system of culture it is idiotic, addle-brained, unreasoning, topsy-turvy, without precision, and its genius chiefly runs to marvelous contrivances for enslaving the many and enriching the few. I see absolutely no proof that the average ability of the white man's brain to think clearly is any greater than that of the yellow man or of the black man. If we take even that doubtful but widely heralded test, the frequency of individual creative genius (when a real racial test should be the frequency of ordinary common sense)—if we take the Genius as the savior of mankind, it is only possible for the white race to prove its own incontestable superiority by appointing both judge and jury and summoning only its own witnesses.

I freely admit that, according to white writers, white teachers, white historians and white molders of public opinion, nothing ever happened in the world of any importance that could not or should not be labeled "white." How silly. I place black iron welding and village democracy and yellow printing and state building side by side with white representative government and the steam engine, and unhesitatingly give the palm to the first. I hand the first vast conception of the solar system to the Africanized Egyptians, the creation of Art to the Chinese, and then let Europe rave over the Factory system.

"But is not well-being more widely diffused among white folk than among yellow and black, and general intelligence more common?"

Momentarily true; and why? Ask the geography of Europe, the African Slave Trade and the Imperial Industrialization of the nineteenth-century

white man. Turn the thing around and let mountain and sea protect and isolate a continuous tradition of culture among yellow and black for one thousand years, while simultaneously they bleed the world of its brawn and wealth, and you will have exactly what we have today, under another name and color.

"Precisely. Then, at least, the white race is more advanced and no more blameworthy than others because, as I insist, its native intelligence is greater. It is germ plasm—seed—that I am talking about. Do you believe in heredity?"

Not blindly; but I should be mildly surprised to see a dog born of a cat.

"Exactly; or a genius born of a fool."

No, no; on the contrary, I rather expect fools of geniuses and geniuses of fools. And while I stoutly maintain that cattiness and dogginess are as far apart as the East from the West, on the other hand I just as strongly believe that the human ass and superman have much in common and can often, if not always, spawn each other.

"Is it possible that you have never heard of the Jukes, or of the man who married first an idiot and then a prune?"

It is not possible; they have been served up to me *ad infinitum*. But they are nothing. I know greater wonders: Lincoln from Nancy Hanks, Dumas from a black beast of burden, Kant from a saddler, and Jesus Christ from a manger.

"All of which, instead of disproving, is exact and definite proof of the persistence of good blood."

Precisely, and of the catholicity of its tastes; the method of proof is this: When anything good occurs, it is proof of good blood; when anything bad occurs, it is proof of bad blood. Very well. Now good and bad, native endowment and native deficiency, do not follow racial lines. There is good stock in all races and the outcropping of bad individuals, too; and there has been absolutely no proof that the white race has any larger share of the gifted strains of human heritage than the black race or the yellow race. To be sure, good seed

proves itself in the flower and fruit, but the failure of seed to sprout is no proof that it is not good. It may be proof simply of the absence of manure—or its excessive presence.

Granted, that when time began, there was hidden in a Seed that tiny speck that spelled the world's salvation, do you think today it would manifest itself crudely and baldly in a dash of skin color and a crinkle of hair? Is the subtle mystery of life and consciousness and of ability portrayed in any such slapdash and obvious marks of difference?

"Go out upon the street; choose ten white men and ten colored men. Which can best carry on and preserve American civilization?"

The whites.

"Well, then!"

You evidently consider that a compliment. Let it pass. Go out upon the street and choose ten men and ten women. Which could best run a Ford car? The men, of course; but—hold. Fly out into the sky and look down upon ten children of Podunk and ten children of Chicago. Which would know most about elevated railroads, baseball, zoology and movies?

"The point is visible, but beyond that, outside of mere experience and education, and harking back to native gift and intelligence, on your honor, which has most, white folk or black folk?"

There you have me deep in the shadows, beyond the benign guidance of words. Just what is gift and intelligence, especially of the native sort? And when we compare the gift of one human soul with that of another, are we not seeking to measure incommensurable things; trying to lump things like sunlight and music and love? And if a certain shadowy Over-soul can really compare the incomparable with some transcendental yardstick, may we not here emerge into a super-equality of man? At least this I can quite believe.

"But it is a pious belief, not more."

Not more; but a pious belief outweighs an impious unbelief.

II

ADMITTING that the problem of native human endowment is obscure, there is no corresponding obscurity in spiritual values. Goodness and unselfishness; simplicity and honor; tolerance, susceptibility to beauty in form, color and music; courage to look truth in the face; courage to live and suffer in patience and humility, and forgiveness and in hope; eagerness to turn, not simply the other cheek, but the face and the bowed back; capacity to love. In all these mighty things, the greatest things in the world, where do black folk and white folk stand?

Why, man of mine, you would not have the courage to live one hour as a black man in America, or as a Negro in the whole wide world. Ah, yes, I know what you whisper to such accusation. You say dryly that if we had good sense, we would not live either; and that the fact that we do submit to life as it is and yet laugh and dance and dream is but another proof that we are idiots.

This is the truly marvelous way in which you prove your superiority by admitting that our love of life can only be intelligently explained on the hypothesis of inferiority. What finer tribute is possible to our courage?

What great works of Art have we made? Very few. The Pyramids, Luqsor, the Bronzes of Benin, the Spears of the Bongo, "When Malinda Sings" and the Sorrow Song she is always singing. Oh, yes, and the love of her dancing.

But art is not simply works of art; it is the spirit that knows Beauty, that has music in its soul and the color of sunsets in its headkerchiefs; that can dance on a flaming world and make the world dance, too. Such is the soul of the Negro.

Why, do you know the two finest things in the industry of the West, finer than factory, shop or ship? One is the black laborers' Saturday off. Neither the whip of the driver, nor starvation wage, nor the disgust of the Yankee,

nor the call of the cotton crop, has yet convinced the common black variety of plantation laborer that one day in the week is enough for rest and play. He wants two days. And, from California to Texas, from Florida to Trinidad, he takes two days while the planter screams and curses. They have beaten the English slavey, the French and German peasants and the North Italian contadini into twelve-hour, six-day slaves. They crushed the Chinese and Indian coolie into a twenty-four-hour beast of burden; they have even made the American, free, white and twenty-one, believe that daily toil is one of the Ten Commandments. But not the Negro. From Monday to Friday the field hand is a slave; then for forty-eight golden hours he is free, and through these same forty-eight hours he may yet free the dumb, driven cattle of the world.

Then the second thing, laughter. This race has the greatest of the gifts of God, laughter. It dances and sings; it is humble; it longs to learn; it loves men; it loves women. It is frankly, baldly, deliciously human in an artificial and hypocritical land. If you will hear men laugh, go to Guinea, "Black Bottom," "Niggertown," Harlem. If you want to feel humor too exquisite and subtle for translation, sit invisibly among a gang of Negro workers. The white world has its gibes and cruel caricatures; it has its loud guffaws, but to the black world alone belongs the delicious chuckle.

"But the State; the modern industrial State. Wealth of work, wealth of commerce, factory and mine, skyscrapers; New York, Chicago, Johannesburg, Lyons and Liverpool."

This is the best expression of the civilization in which the white race finds itself today. This is what the white world means by culture.

"Does it not excel the black and yellow race here?"

It does. But the excellence here raises no envy; only regrets. If this vast Frankenstein monster really served its makers; if it were their minister and

not their master, god and king; if their machines gave us rest and leisure, instead of the drab uniformity of uninteresting drudgery; if their factories gave us gracious community of thought and feeling; beauty enshrined, free and joyous; if their work veiled them with tender sympathy at human distress and wide tolerance and understanding—then, all hail, White Imperial Industry. But it does not. It is a Beast! Its creators even do not understand it, cannot curb or guide it. They, themselves, are but hideous, groping higher Hands, doing their bit to oil the raging, devastating machinery which kills men to make cloth, prostitutes women to rear buildings and eats little children.

Is this superiority? It is madness. We are the supermen who sit idly by and laugh and look at civilization. We, who frankly want the bodies of our mates and conjure no blush to our bronze cheeks when we own it. We, who exalt the Lynched above the Lyncher and the Worker above the Owner and the Crucified above Imperial Rome.

"But why have you black and yellow men done nothing better or even as good in the history of the world?"

We have, often.

"I never heard of it."

Lions have no historians.

"It is idiotic even to discuss it. Look around and see the pageantry of the world. It belongs to white men; it is the expression of white power; it is the product of white brains. Who can have the effrontery to stand for a moment and compare with this white triumph, yellow and brown anarchy and black savagery?"

You are obsessed by the swiftness of the gliding of the sled at the bottom of the hill. You say: What tremendous power must have caused its speed, and how wonderful is Speed. You think of the rider as the originator and inventor of that vast power. You admire his poise and *sang froid*, his utter self-absorption. You say: Surely here is the Son of God and he shall reign forever and forever.

You are wrong, quite wrong. Away back on the level stretches of the mountain tops in the forests, amid drifts and driftwood, this sled was slowly and painfully pushed on its little hesitating start. It took power, but the power of sweating, courageous men, not of demi-gods. As the sled slowly started and gained momentum, it was the Law of Being that gave it speed, and the grace of God that steered its lone, scared passengers. Those passengers, white, black, red and yellow, deserve credit for their balance and pluck. But many times it was sheer good luck that the made road did not land the white man in the gutter, as it had others so many times before, and as it may him yet. He has gone farther than others because of others whose very falling made hard ways iced and smooth for him to traverse. His triumph is a triumph not of himself alone, but of humankind, from the pusher in the primeval forests to the last flier through the winds of the twentieth century.

III

AND so to leave our parable and come to reality. Great as has been the human advance in the last one thousand years, it is, so far as native human ability, so far as intellectual gift and moral courage are concerned, nothing as compared with any one of ten and more millenniums before, far back in the forests of tropical Africa and in hot India, where brown and black humankind first fought climate and disease and bugs and beasts; where man dared simply to live and propagate himself. There was the hardest and greatest struggle in all the human world. If in sheer exhaustion or in desperate self-defense during this last moment of civilization he has rested, half inert and blinded with the sweat of his efforts, it is only the silly onlooker who sees but the passing moment of time, who can think of him as subhuman and inferior.

All this is Truth, but unknown, unapprehended Truth. Indeed, the greatest and most immediate danger of white

culture, perhaps least sensed, is its fear of the Truth. Its childish belief in the efficacy of lies as a method of human uplift. The lie is defensible; it has been used widely and often profitably among humankind. But it may be doubted if ever before in the world so many intelligent people believed in it so deeply. We deliberately and continuously deceive not simply others, but ourselves as to the truth about them, us and the world. We have raised Propaganda to capital "P" and elaborated an art, almost a science of how one may make the world believe what is not true, provided the untruth is a widely wished-for thing like the probable extermination of Negroes, the failure of the Chinese Republic, the incapacity of India for self-rule, the failure of Russian Revolution. When in other days the world lied, it was to a world that expected lies and consciously defended them; when the world lies today it is to a world that pretends to be true.

"In other words, according to you, white folk are about the meanest and lowest on earth."

They are human, even as you and I.

"Why don't you leave them then? Get out, go to Africa or to the North Pole; shake the dust of their hospitality from off your feet?"

There are abundant reasons. First, they have annexed the earth and hold it by transient but real power. Thus by running away, I shall not only not escape them, but succeed in hiding myself in out of the way places where they can work their deviltry on me without photograph, telegraph or telephone. But even more important than this: I am as bad as they are. In fact, I am related to them and they have much that belongs to me—this land, for instance, for which my fathers starved and fought; I

share their sins; in fine, I am related to them.

"By blood?"

By blood.

"Then you are railing at yourself. You are not black; you are no Negro."

And you? Yellow blood and black has deluged Europe in days past even more than America yesterday. You are not white, as the measurements of your head will show.

"What then becomes of all your argument, if there are no races and we are all so horribly mixed as you maliciously charge?"

Oh, my friend, can you not see that I am laughing at you? Do you suppose this world of men is simply a great layer cake with superimposed slices of inferior and superior races, interlaid with mud?

No, no. Human beings are infinite in variety, and when they are agglutinated in groups, great and small, the groups differ as though they, too, had integrating souls. But they have not. The soul is still individual if it is free; the group is a social, sometimes an historical fact. And all that I really have been trying to say is that a certain group that I know and to which I belong, as contrasted with the group you know and to which you belong, and in which you fanatically and glorifyingly believe, bears in its bosom just now the spiritual hope of this land because of the persons who compose it and not by divine command.

"But what is this group; and how do you differentiate it; and how can you call it 'black' when you admit it is not black?"

I recognize it quite easily and with full legal sanction: the black man is a person who must ride "Jim Crow" in Georgia.



Respectable

By Anne Miller Downes

I
SHE was thinking of that hawk. She had seen its talons sinking into the tender back of a little chicken. For a moment, the small animal's fright and panic were painful to witness, then it became limp and drooped and she was glad when she knew it had stopped feeling. Talons! Talons sunk deep somewhere within her.

Lately it had become a duller pain. It would grow duller and duller until—? The terrifying thought brought moisture to her face. She would pray not to stop feeling—to keep her pain. It was all she had left—her baby and her pain.

She was carrying two large buckets of water from the woodshed. They were too heavy for her slender arms and made her back ache. That was nothing. She wanted to water the roots of her maidenhair tree—her ginkgo.

Crossing the lawn, she felt herself being watched. There was a half-closed shutter and eyes behind it.

No one must know how she felt about the ginkgo tree, so she put the water on the lilacs and clematis instead; but as she passed, the ginkgo swept her face, touched her lips, making her heart leap.

He had planted this ginkgo. She had held it while he packed the dirt about its roots. They had been all alone then—two people alone under a blue sky with the sun lying like gold on the mountains. He had taken out the pins and wound her long brown hair among the fernery of the tree. He did things like that.

A voice came from behind the shutters.

"You'd better come in, Effie, and get dressed. Ruby Peck's likely to come early. You bin up and working steady since five o'clock this morning. You don't want to look dragged the first time the minister takes tea in the new house. You'll want to show him around yourself. You're the only girl in Clearwater owning her own home with a settled income besides. I wish you'd put on your silk dress, Effie."

"I guess you can show him everything, Ma. Ruby Peck's been here most every day for a month, but I'll come. You talk to Ruby until I come down. I like to dress the baby first. I'll go up now."

The baby was getting fatter every day. It was harder to dry in all the pink creases. She wished he could see it splash the water in its bath. When she took it out, it cried and beat her face with fat fists and it hurt her—somewhere inside. It made her think of all his ideas for the boy—gymnasium, school, college. Her people didn't know about such things.

When she came down into the parlor, the minister, Mr. Scales and Mrs. Scales, and Ruby Peck, were there.

Her mother was watching her, so she tried to talk. When with people, she felt herself staring at them—staring and saying nothing.

Ruby took the boy on her lap and crooned baby talk to him. They all mothered the baby and she prepared the supper.

She didn't want help. She wanted to be alone as long as possible—alone

as she went back and forth from kitchen to dining-room—back and forth.

Passing through the hall, she heard them talking about it. She knew they always talked about it. The whole countryside from Clearwater to Huntington talked about it.

She counted out the best napkins, then heard Mr. Scales clear his throat.

She lighted the fire and put soda biscuits into the oven.

"It's the first time such an infamous thing as bigamy has touched one of my flock. It was only the high standing of your late husband as an elder in the church and as selectman in the village, together with your own exemplary character and the established reputation of your daughter that kept the scoundrel out of jail. The boy will never have to say his father was in prison. I suppose the knave has returned to his wife in Canada?"

Ruby Peck spoke up: "He's going tonight, leaving on the midnight train from Clearwater. The agent said he bought a reservation."

She slid quickly into a dining-room chair as a gray mist seemed to cloud her vision. When it cleared she listened hard.

"This is a beautiful home. I believe the first stucco house in town. He could afford to pay handsomely. Everything he touched here turned into money. I believe he transferred all his stocks in the water company to Effie? Just so. Just so. He probably would have left her soon for somebody else. Three years was bad enough, but we rejoice that his iniquity was discovered in time. Your daughter will take her place of honor in the church and community. Your friends will rally about her and time will obliterate the memory of the scoundrel who deceived her."

She placed the napkins—five, and the high chair for the baby; poured boiling water on the tea, setting it to steep; mixed the iced dressing with the salad and announced supper.

She fed the baby and no one but her mother noticed how little she tasted.

Something long, black and ugly came

between her eyes and everything she looked at. Mr. Scales' face was pink and kindly, but when she tried to listen to him, she heard only the roar of low black sleepers rushing through the valley at midnight. She felt stupid. What was he saying?

"You must hire a man to cut the wood, mow the grass and carry water. Those tasks are too hard for you. You have plenty of means now and must give yourself to other kinds of work—labor for the community."

She stared at him. How triumphantly they all talked about the money, the new home and the stocks, as though some good fortune had come to her.

She had been poor, had worked in the millinery store and lived in small rooms with her mother. Now there was a fine house, coupons and a bankbook.

She would speak out and tell them the truth; tell them that these things meant nothing to her. She would tell them about the talons and the pain; would beg them to let her go away with her baby and her pain.

She moved her lips but there was no sound. There was only a buzzing in her ears and a general nausea. Instead of speaking, she arose and waited on them; brought more hot tea and cakes and always before her eyes was the black train, creeping like a serpent toward the north.

Having finished supper, they wanted a fire in the parlor. She lighted it and watched it crackle and spit noisily up the chimney. They needed a fine hickory log that would last all evening.

She went out through the woodshed. There was dew on the grass, so, holding her skirts high, she followed the narrow path to the barn.

Back of the barn a wagon road wound through the field. Across it, moved a black silhouette against an orange sky.

She waited, weak and dizzy, feeling her blood rushing through her head like steam.

He came close to her. He was talking. Now she knew what she had so wanted—much more than the touch of

his hands—his voice. It was low, firm and would answer the question she wanted to ask.

They all said he would have left her anyway. It was that thought that gnawed and made her stupid. He would tell her it was a lie. He wouldn't have left her. She tried to speak. Not a word came out of her stiff lips. She could feel hard cords in her throat. She clutched them tightly with her hand.

He was speaking, asking if there was anything she needed, asking her not to carry the baby—it was too heavy for her back. She saw a white ring settling round his mouth. He was begging her to forgive him, telling her he was a fool—a complete fool—he had lost his head—a man would lose his head over her.

It was her dry lips she heard, saying something that didn't matter.

"There never was anyone before you, David."

He grew whiter. "There probably won't be anyone after, Effie. You're like that."

This didn't matter. She wanted to ask her question—wanted to hear him say he wouldn't have left her. He was turning. He was walking away.

"I'll never bother you, Effie. If you ever need me, write here."

Her hand left her throat and took the paper.

He was walking down the path. He was gone.

She picked up a large hickory log, then stopped to listen. There was someone moving on the other side of the barn—someone running across the grass.

She stumbled up the path, carrying the log which was too heavy for her.

II

WHEN she came into the kitchen, she read the paper, then put it into the stove and watched the embers kindle and consume it. She would never forget that address. She had that kind of a memory.

When putting the log on the fire, she noticed her mother, sitting near the door, breathing hard.

When their guests went home, her mother locked the front door, saying there would be a full moon. Looking out of the window, she saw only a silver ginkgo tree and under it in the grass, tiny black shadows, twisting and turning like disheveled maiden hair.

She closed the shutters and went into the kitchen.

"You needn't wait up, Ma. I am going to mix the bread and lay the fire for morning."

When her mother didn't answer, she looked at her and saw her breathing hard again.

"You ain't getting soft, are you, Effie? We've always bin respectable. I'm old. Effie, and I want to be respectable."

She felt the talons sinking deeper.

"Yes, Ma."

"You ain't getting soft, Effie?"

"No, Ma. You go to bed; you're tired."

Her mother went upstairs and she heard her moving about overhead, fixing the windows for the night.

She mixed the bread and laid the fire. When finished, she turned out the light, quietly opened the door and stood leaning against the jamb. She listened. All was quiet overhead so she could stand here and look at the wagon path in the field. The moon transformed it into silver bands. It was brilliantly lighted back to the high road. She was alone and no one could see her stare at it. She stared and stared, imagining herself hurrying along it with her baby in her arms, escaping into the woods.

The night seemed steep with quiet and rest. Her hands were tingling. She laid them close under her armpits and brought them down hard on her body—close down, down, feeling all the full curves of her form. He did things like that.

Then she felt eyes watching her.

"Why don't you go to bed, Effie?"

"I'm coming, Ma."

She closed and locked the door, her head buzzing and stupid.

"You ain't getting soft, are you, Effie?"

"No, Ma. You go to bed."

The baby had kicked the covers off so she pulled them up close around him. He had just a little hair which she could see lying damp in his neck.

When she undressed, she kept her underclothes on beneath her nightgown and didn't remove her stockings.

She looked at the clock, saw it was after eleven, turned out the light and got into bed.

Then she listened. She listened so hard she could hear something beating in her body and the baby breathing in his crib across the room. She could hear the little stirrings of the wind. She listened because she knew he would come.

She wanted to look out of the window to watch the light on the wagon path, but she didn't dare move. She lay still, holding her breath and listening.

It was because she was hardly breathing that she heard him coming across the field. The cat must have come out of the barn. It mewed. She pictured it, rubbing against his legs.

She heard him walking on the lawn, then almost as light as the baby's breath-

ing, his steps on the porch. They stopped under her window.

She felt strangled. She pushed back the quilts. Her blue silk dress was lying on the chair. Her hat and coat were on the rack downstairs.

She made no noise, crossing the room in her stocking feet. She crept to the closet and took the shoes. When she straightened up with them in her hand, she felt eyes watching her.

"I came in, Effie, to tell you something Ruby Peck whispered to me. They wanted it a surprise but I don't think there'll be any harm in telling you now. They're going to honor you by making you president of the Pastor's Aid and you're to be invited to be on the Board of Directors of the Woman's Civic Club.

"Your Pa was a selectman and an elder. We've always bin respectable, Effie."

"Yes, Ma, you go to bed."

"You ain't getting soft, Effie?"

"No, Ma. You go to bed."

For hours she lay with stupid pains in her head, staring into the moonlight.

Once she put up her hands and wrung them hard. It was when a long black train of sleepers went screeching northward through the valley.



LIFE to many men consists chiefly in bringing out the bottles as quickly as possible when one kind of company comes and getting them out of sight as quickly as possible when another kind comes.



ALL girls act the same when they want a kiss. The difference consists in their actions when they want another one.

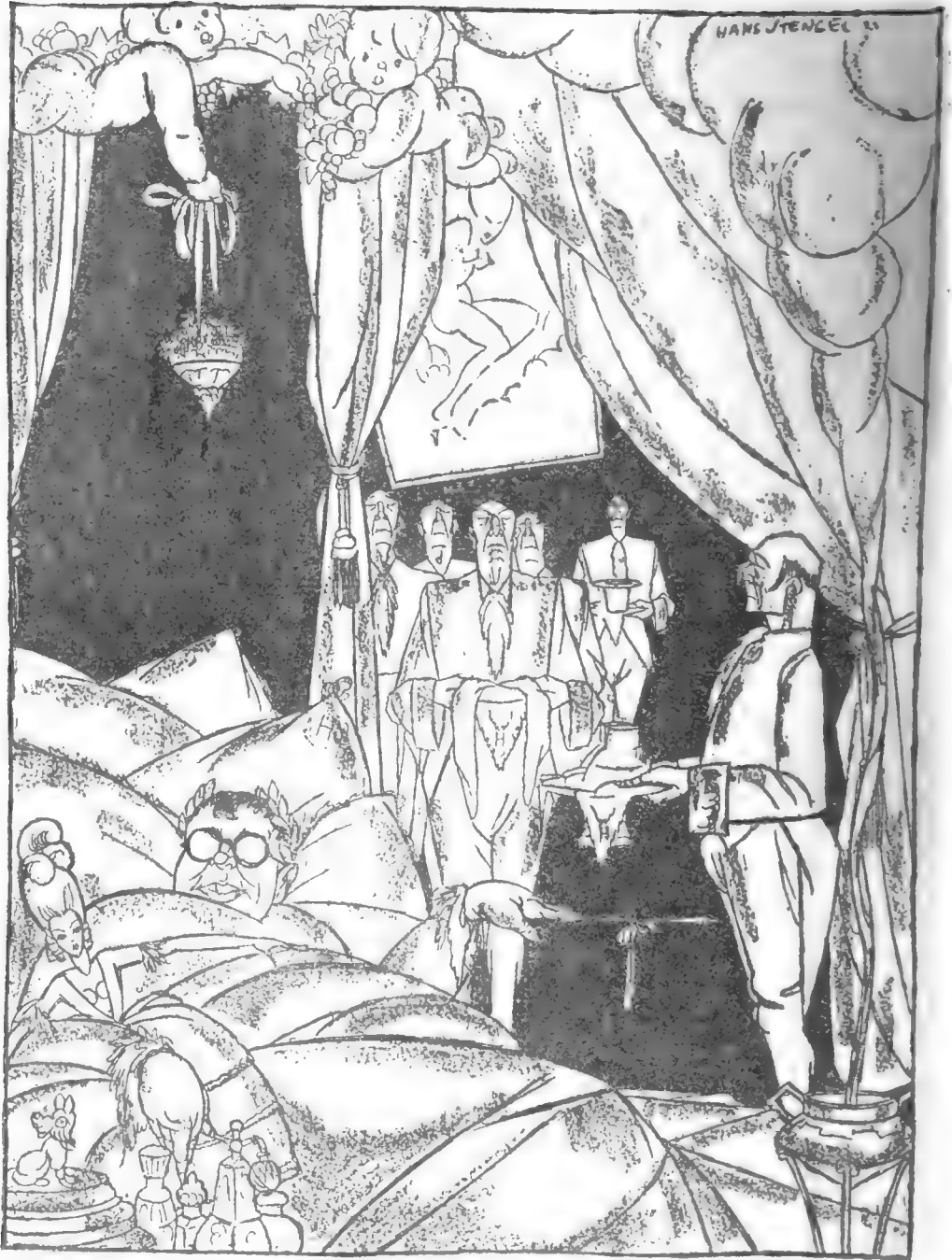


THE trouble with most religious sects is that they make more of Sunday than they do of God.



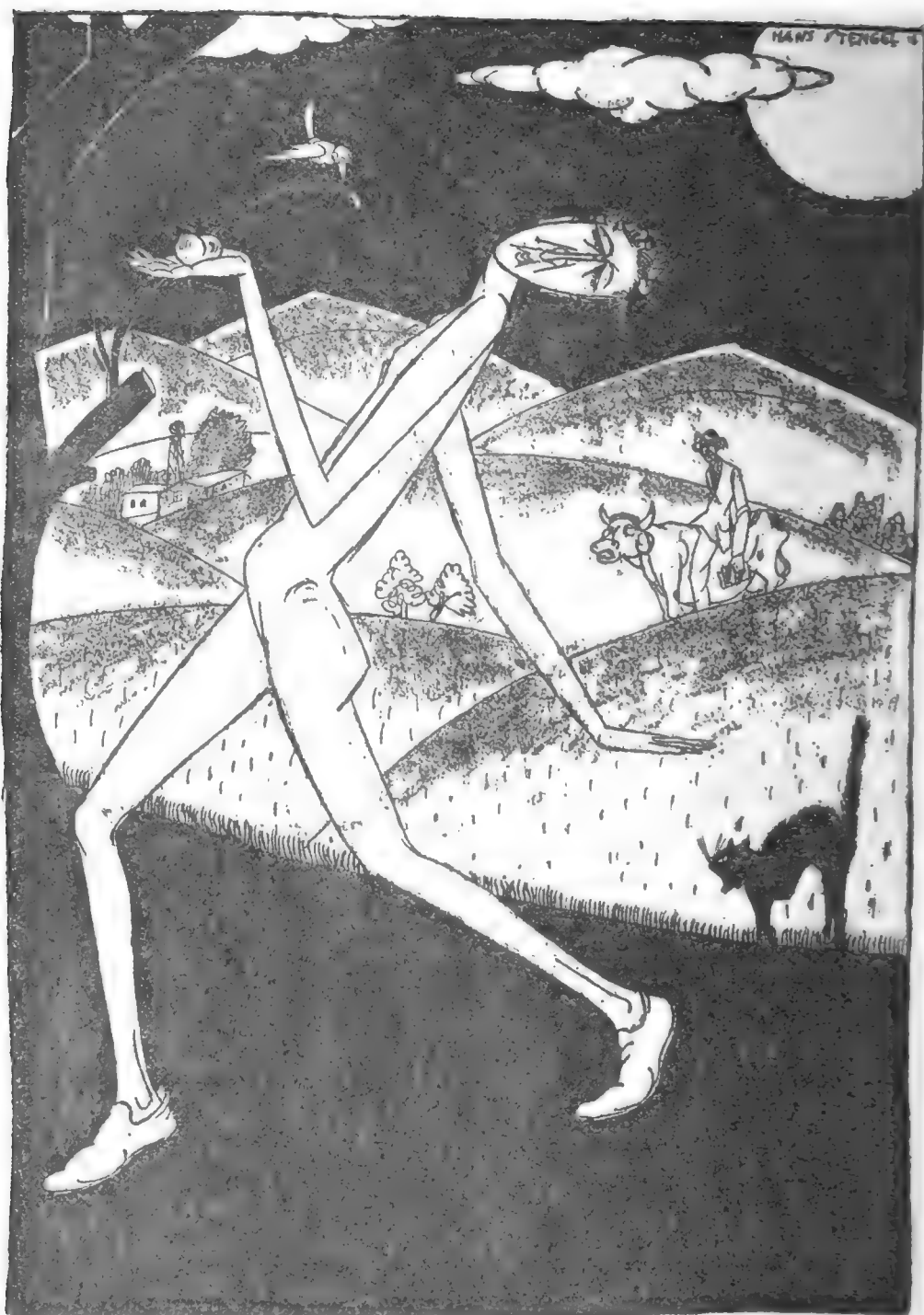
*The World as
Seen by Four
American
Novelists*

*By
Hans Stengel*





II. Theodore Dreiser



III. Sherwood Anderson



IV. *James Branch Cabell*

The Fairies

By H. L. Stuart

BOBBIE: Tell us a story, uncle.

BETTIE: Yes, yes, uncle. A fairy story 'bout elves and things.

UNCLE: Well, once there was a beautiful fairy queen who lived in a palace way down under the roots of a big, big tree, with—er—squirrels for her maids and chipmunks for her gardeners and, of course, they all sat on toadstools and drank dew out of cute little acorn cups.

BOBBIE: Gee!

BOBBIE (*snuggling*): 'S nice. Go on, uncle.

UNCLE: One day she thought she'd pay a call on a dwarf who lived right across the other edge of the wood. So she called her coach, and of course, it was just a big squash all hollowed out, with six rabbits to draw it and a big rat driver with a long tail that he used as a whip.

BETTIE: } Oh, uncle, hadn't she an
BOBBIE: } automobile?

UNCLE: Bless my soul. Well, she called her automobile—

BETTIE: Was it a Slodge, '22, uncle?

BOBBIE: No. I want it a Carrick six.

BETTIE: Go on. You don't have to shift gears with a Slodge, an' you can get away every time on high, and you can slow down in traffic 'thout pulling out the clutch all the time. I hate clutches.

BOBBIE: All girls know 's just driving. What about the engine? Carrick's got its cylinders close together. That cuts out misfires, and the transmission unit's lots heavier an'—

BETTIE: I don't care. I wanna Slodge.

BOBBIE: Oh well, have your old Slodge.

BOBBIE: } Go on about the fairies,
BETTIE: } uncle.



THE husband who slams the door when he goes out annoys his wife. The husband who doesn't slam the door when he comes in causes her trepidation.



A MAN believes in one woman, and experiments with the rest.



The Return Trip

(A One-Act Play)

By Ford Douglas

CHARACTERS:

BURRIS, *an insurance agent*
LAPSLEY, *a lumber dealer*
QUARLES, *a realtor*
BUCHANAN, *a coal man*
MCCRARY, *a lawyer*
BOLEN, *an amateur sportsman*
SWEENEY, *a chauffeur*

SCENE: *A cemetery on a bleak and dreary day. The mortal remains of Mr. James W. Parker, chattel mortgage broker, are being lowered into the earth by an automatic windlass, accompanied by the conventional moans of the widow. Six shivering pallbearers march bareheaded back to a waiting automobile, where an undertaker's assistant creates some little confusion in the distribution of hats and overcoats.*

BURRIS

(With great humility.) You boys take the back seats. I'll sit up here with the driver.

(They climb in awkwardly, barking their shins and stepping on each other's feet, followed by elaborate apologies, eventually finding seats. The chauffeur, who has been impatiently fumbling with the throttle, throws the gear into "high," and after a few deafening explosions in the muffler, they are off.)

BOLEN

It looks like snow, don't it? I would have gone duck hunting today if I hadn't got hooked in on this—

LAPSLEY

I was awful busy, too. Of course I couldn't refuse when—

QUARLES

(The sole volunteer, sighing loudly.) Well, poor old Jim is gone. I can hard-

ly realize it. Only last week I saw him on the street and he looked so well and strong.

BURRIS

(Turning around in his seat.) I talked to him just a few days ago. I said to him, "Jim, you ought to take out about twenty thousand more while you can get it." But he put me off, and now it's too late. Insurance is a mighty important thing, boys. I've seen a lot of cases like that. Sheer neglect—criminal, almost.

QUARLES

It reminds me of my uncle. A big, powerful man he was. But one day he got hit by an auto truck and he lived only a week. I was there when he died—the most pathetic thing I ever saw. The old man had always been a hearty eater, and he loved liver and onions. The last thing he said was

"If I only had a mess of liver and onions." Those were his last words, "Liver and onions." Mighty sad.

(The others seem deeply impressed, and the final utterance of the expiring uncle recalled to them the last words of other relatives and friends. One had made inquiry as to the wheat market, another had demanded that the window be closed, a third had endeavored to borrow some money. Those incidents, together with gruesome descriptions of the scenes that accompanied them, are solemnly related.)

BUCHANAN

Lord, wasn't that casket heavy! Look at my hands. *(He holds them aloft exhibiting slightly reddened palms.)* There were some slackers on my end of it and they slipped me the whole load. From now on I'm going to be an honorary palbearer, believe me.

McCRARY

I wonder how much Parker left. Do any of you fellows know who is going to handle the probate matters?

LAPSLEY

The widow's brother, I think. A young fellow named Pollock.

McCRARY

Not that young cub, Pollock? Great God! He'll ball it all up. Probate practice is very technical, very. I had a case once that—

BOLEN

Lord, what a day for duck shooting! It was about this time last year and I was sitting in the blinds—when here they come, a big flock of mallards. I didn't move till they got right over my head, and—

QUARLES

Yes, those were his last words, "Liver and onions." Then he was gone like that. *(He snaps a finger to better pic-*

ture his uncle's departure.) It made a big impression on me—

BOLEN

Then I rose up and let 'em have it—both barrels, "*Blewie! Blewie!*"

(A billboard advertising shaving soap by the roadside now turns the conversation to the merits of the various brands on the market, and later to dentifrices and toothbrushes, each, it appears, having a champion. From this, inspired by another roadside advertisement, the discussion covers department stores and their wares, including the evolution of certain intimate garments of female wearing apparel, the recollection of a number of them harkening back to the red flannel period.)

LAPSLEY

(Who has lighted a cigar and is sprawled luxuriously in the best seat.) Say, fellows, not to change the subject, but this is a pretty easy riding boat, isn't it. A Studebaker or a Gnash, I'd say.

SWEENEY

It's neither. It's a Simpleton Six and not worth a damn! We used it for a hearse for a while, but it broke down so often that the boss put this sedan body on it and put in livery. You see a hearse has just naturally got to be reliable—especially on the trip out. Bustin' down and havin' to be towed creates dissatisfaction and—

QUARLES

(In sudden alarm.) A hearse you say? Great God, let me out of here!

BOLEN

Sit still and don't rock the boat. We'll soon be in town.

SWEENEY

You bet we will, cause it's aill down grade, and this is one of the best little down-hill cars made. And, by the way, where do you guys want to go?

BUCHANAN

(Looking at his watch.) Let's see,

it's 4:10. I think I will drop off at my office. I've got some letters to sign.

QUARLES

If I had known this car was ever used for a hearse I wouldn't have got in it for a million dollars.

LAPSLEY

There's no use in me going back to the lumber yard, so I think I will go on home. But of course I don't want to take you boys out of your way.

(They all assure Lapsley that they will not be inconvenienced.)

SWEENEY

Where do you live, brother?

LAPSLEY

Ninety-third and Euclid.

SWEENEY

Great God!

BURRIS

(Turning around again in his seat.) Of course, gentlemen, this is probably no occasion to talk business, but you can see what happened to Parker. His widow loses twenty thousand as slick as a whistle—just out of neglect.

QUARLES

What would twenty thousand cost?

BURRIS

(Fishing a rather soiled booklet out of his pocket.) I'll tell you in just a moment. *(He turns the leaves rapidly.)* Let's see, You're about fifty-five. Now what plan would interest you the most—a twenty-year endowment or a straight life policy?—say, better yet, I'll drop around to your office in the morning with the whole thing figured out.

QUARLES

No; never mind. I was only asking to keep from thinking of that hearse.

BURRIS

It will be no trouble at all, old man. And I'll bring along our examining physician, who will test your blood pressure and listen to your heart thump a little.

QUARLES

(Hastily.) No, you won't. I wouldn't get examined for a thousand dollars. Those doctors are always finding something wrong with you. *(He shudders.)* Forget it!

BURRIS

(Sullenly restoring the booklet to his pocket.) Very well then. But the time may come when some of us right here now in this car will remember—

QUARLES

(Writhing in his seat.) Forget it, can't you? Lay off of me!

MCCRARY

Are you sure that Pollock's got the estate business cinched? *(He draws from his pocket a number of business cards and hands them around.)* Well, in case you ever need anyone in my line. . . .

(The material side of life being thus presented, they all produce their business cards and there is a general exchange, followed by a great deal of hand-shaking and assurances of a mutual and speedy interchange of business.)

BUCHANAN

(Who has been thinking.) Say, boys, I really ought to go around to my office before it closes. Now listen. I want to make you a proposition. It's been a pretty cold day and we are all pretty well chilled, and so if you will drop me off there I will invite you in. I've got a bottle of Scotch in the vault and—

BOLEN

Three cheers for Buchanan. His suggestion is the only good news I've heard today.

SWEENEY

(*Slowing up and turning around.*)
Say, brother, am I in on that?

BUCHANAN

Sure you are.

SWEENEY

Well, then, let's go! (*He steps on the gas and the Simpleton Six leaps forward to the deafening explosions of the engine.*)

QUARLES

(*Rising in alarm from his seat and staring over the chauffeur's shoulder at the speedometer.*) Say, look here! You said this old bus couldn't go—and we're doing 55 right now. Slow up, can't you?

BOLEN

Ataboy! Who'd a thought we'd even do 55 in a hearse? Let her out, driver. Show us some speed!

LAPSLEY

(*Very white but trying to appear unconcerned.*) Say, fellows, it wouldn't look very well in the papers if we got pinched for speeding—coming back from a funeral—

BOLEN

Yow! Yowie! Step on her, old kid, and let's get somewhere.

BURRIS

(*Drawing his booklet again and shouting to be heard above the roar of the engine.*) Our company pays double for death claims from auto accidents, and other injuries in proportion. Listen. (*Reads.*) For the loss of both eyes, both legs and both arms—

QUARLES

(*Rising to his feet.*) Stop! I'm going to get out. You've all gone crazy and I won't ride with a lot of damn speed maniacs.

BOLEN

Yip! Yip! Yowie! A short life and a merry one. Give her some more gas, driver, and show us what she'll do.

QUARLES

(*Putting one leg over the side of the car.*) Stop her or I'll jump!

(*Fortunately for all, perhaps, the machine comes to a halt at a street-car intersection and QUARLES, thoroughly infuriated, climbs out.*)

BURRIS

(*Apologetically to the others.*) Excuse me for leaving, too. I wouldn't do it, but I think our friend Quarles is ripe right now for a little talk on insurance. Nothing like striking when the iron is hot. (*He steps out of the car and hastens after QUARLES.*)

LAPSLEY

I've had enough. This street car will take me within a block of home. Good night!

MCCRARY

I live right here in the neighborhood and I'm going to quit you, too. Bolen, I'm going to be frank with you: You're just a plain, damn fool! Good night, Mr. Buchanan.

BUCHANAN

(*Shortly.*) Good night.

BOLEN

(*To Buchanan.*) Say, do you think he's sore or something? He belongs to a fishing club that I'm trying to get into and I can't afford to offend him. Say, I'm going to catch him and square things. Awfully sorry, but you can see the fix I've got into. Good night. (*He jumps from the car and hurries after the vanishing lawyer.*)

(*The sedan resumes its way in the gathering gloom, now at a very much slower pace, with the coal merchant as its sole passenger.*)

BUCHANAN

(*Musing aloud after riding some ten minutes in thoughtful silence.*) Well, I don't give a damn! They'd probably never buy any coal, and anyhow I've saved a lot of Scotch. To hell with 'em!

(Curtain)

The Bathroom Key

By S. N. Behrman and J. K. Nicholson

I

IN a sense, Matthew Noon was the autocrat of the "Avon Studios," as the landlady, Mrs. Lovell, irrelevantly called her two top floors at No.— West 36th Street. Other roomers came and went but Noon was institutional. Mrs. Lovell was secretly very proud of her Mr. Noon, and was often heard referring to him as "the only real gentleman in her house." In fact, it was rumored that between Noon and Mrs. Lovell there was—in spite of Noon's well-known antipathy for women—a special arrangement which permitted him a certain latitude in the matter of rent. During the summer months Noon, who was a tutor, found pupils hard to get and he propitiated Mrs. Lovell for tardy payments by interviewing prospective roomers during her absence at her other "studio" on 31st Street.

Mrs. Lovell, who liked to think of herself as artistic, sought to shed a glamour of Bohemianism over her domains by styling them "studios." And to justify this extravagant terminology she cited the artists who were her 36th Street tenants: Daisy Schraider, who sang in a cabaret; Ben Hallett, who played the piano in the Yorkville Casino; Mrs. Swayzee, who sought alleviation from a distasteful marriage by painting oils; Ben Fulda, the caricaturist; and Orville Kincaid, who worked as a model for some of the best artists in town. Then, Mrs. Lovell, by way of sober climax, always mentioned Matthew Noon, who was a professor and who ushered at the

fashionable St. Gregory's twice each Sunday.

Noon was nearly fifty and English by birth—a stoutish, big-boned man with a florid face and slightly protuberant eyes, at once hard and watery. On Sundays, when he got out his frock coat and silk hat to go to St. Gregory's Episcopal, he was indistinguishable from the prosperous business men who filled the pews. For two hours every Sunday Matthew Noon forgot that he was an occupant of a dingy rooming-house, earning a precarious living by tutoring foreigners, and he became in his imagination a captain of finance. No one could doubt that he had the grand manner as he marched down to the candle-decked altar to the accompaniment of the offertory hymn for the brass and plush plate which he held under the noses of the affluent worshipers. It was chiefly through his churchly connections that he enjoyed the prestige of being the most respectable tenant of the Avon Studios. Though he did cook his own meals over the one-flame gas-burner in the tiny bedroom which served also as his classroom, there still clung about him the aristocratic aureole of one who ushers at St. Gregory's in a frock-coat, one who has a nodding acquaintance with Wall Street magnates.

At the other end of the hall from Noon lived Miss Timme. When she first moved into the Studios the war was on and Noon denounced her volubly to the other roomers as belonging to "the enemies of civilization." He informed Mrs. Lovell that, in his opinion, it was a lapse from patriotism.

to let a room to a person who could scarcely speak the King's English.

Noon even suggested that Miss Timme might be a spy. How else could one account for her aloofness, her silence, her isolation? Like most of the roomers she bought her food at a neighboring Delicatessen, and "ate in." At first, during the days and evenings, no sound ever came from her room, but after she had been living in the Studios several months she managed in some way to make friends with Lionel, Mrs. Lovell's four-year-old son. Lionel was an indescribably dirty but good-looking youngster with great dark eyes and an enchanting smile. He was always timid in his relations with the roomers, but for some reason Miss Timme appealed to him. He got into the habit of going into her room every night before his mother put him to bed. After that one heard sounds of romping, Lionel's shrieks of delight and Miss Timme's laughter as they played together.

The rest of the time no one ever came to see Miss Timme, nor did Miss Timme see anyone except a pimply-faced young man who came once a week to bring her a large box of custom-made shirts upon which it was her task to embroider monograms. For a time it was not known in the Studios that Miss Timme was a seamstress and the source of her income was a subject for speculation. In a hallway discussion with "Pop" Farley, an insurance agent, who lived upstairs, Noon had once suggested facetiously that, at any rate, it was quite safe to assume that Miss Timme did not make her living "off of men"—a reference to her physical gracelessness that seemed to divert both of them greatly. . . .

Already, Matthew Noon had crossed swords with Miss Timme. That was over a half-grown, stray cat. There had been a forlorn, scrawny thing prowling about the Studios, an invader most likely from the New Idea Fixture Company, below stairs. The presence of this cat on his floor infuriated Noon, especially as it occasionally wandered

into his room. Every time he saw it in the hall he kicked at it.

One day Miss Timme, back from her daily trip to the Sixth Avenue Delicatessen, saw Noon pick up the cat by the scruff of its neck and throw it down the stairs. He was shouting imprecations against Mr. Rosenblum of the Fixture Company, adjuring him to keep his "dirty animal" to himself. Peering over the banister Noon saw Miss Timme take up the terrified creature, huddle it under her absurd, flapping black cape and advance up the stairs.

"You'll not bring that nasty cat up here!" he cried.

Miss Timme, an incredibly grotesque figure, her face swarthy, masculine, her bony hands clutching to her flat bosom the bundles and the mewling cat, her lips trembling, continued to come up the stairs. Noon now directed his imprecations at her, a fusillade of denunciation. Nevertheless, Miss Timme advanced, her whole body shaking, her feet, in their misshapen shoes, making a curious sound against the bottom of her long skirt. When she reached the head of the stairs Noon's invective reached its climax.

"You'll not bring that cat up here, you crazy loon!" he screamed.

The other roomers, excited and eager to hear more, had opened their doors.

Miss Timme started past him. Noon clutched at the cat. She dropped her bundles and folded both arms over the cat.

"You leave me alone!"

Her hoarse, guttural voice made no more sound than a loud whisper, but it had the intensity of a shriek. Noon made no further effort to wrest the cat from her. A moment later she disappeared into her room. Noon stooped, picked up one of the packages she had dropped and hurled it at her door:

"You crazy loon!"

For three days after this incident, Miss Timme kept the cat in her room, locking the door each time she went out. But one evening, while she admitted Lionel for his nightly revel, the cat escaped.

Noon, who was sitting in his room with the door open, saw the cat. He arose stealthily, stole out into the hall and picked it up. By the time Miss Timme was aware of her loss Noon had reached the street, the cat under his arm.

After a moment's search he found a stout board on the curb. With a neat blow on the back of the skull he despatched the cat, and threw it savagely into an ash-can nearby.

"I guess that'll hold you for a bit," said Noon, addressing the cat.

From the time of this episode there was, between Noon and Miss Timme, an implacable hostility. In speaking of her to the others Noon always referred to her as "that crazy loon." The notion that Miss Timme was not quite right in her head got to pervade the Avon Studios. . . .

II

BUT the real feud between Noon and Miss Timme began over the question of the "open door" as far as the bathroom was concerned.

To appreciate the intensity of this feud and its culmination something must be conveyed of Mr. Noon's personal habits, and of the rather constricted physical conditions under which he lived.

In the Avon Studios there are three sizes of rooms; quite large ones occupied by its plutocracy consisting of "Doc" Slavin, who had an office with an electric sign on 14th Street for the rapid cure of diseases commonly given out as incurable by his less optimistic colleagues; Mr. Barowsky, who ran a vaudeville agency in the vicinity of Times Square; and Daisy Schraider, who was reputed to have made her living by sporadic engagements in cabarets. Upstairs are two rooms of intermediate size, both of them occupied by Mrs. Lovell, her husband and two children, Lionel and Jerome. The rest can scarcely be called rooms. They are slits of space, cubicles, inadequate closets. . . . And yet, in rooms like

these, Ben Hallett, the pianist, played Bach on his Virgil Clavier; Ben Fulda drew stark and merciless cartoons; Mrs. Swayzee tried to paint; Matthew Noon cooked and ate and slept and taught grammar and rhetoric to ambitious foreigners alight for the benefits of Americanization.

To live in a room of these dimensions one must be an artist in compression. Sitting at his desk, which served also as his dining-table, Noon could almost reach out with his hand and touch the chief object of furniture: his cot bed, the gas stove on the stand directly behind him in the narrow space between his chair and the window, the little shelf of books—at least two feet short of the length authorized by Harvard's late president—containing such manuals as Paley and Moore's English Grammar, Hill's Rhetoric, Wooley's Handbook of Composition. . . . There was another chair across the table from Noon where his pupils sat. This chair was just inside the door, so close that it had to be moved each time the door was opened or shut.

And yet Noon was far from being conscious of poverty of possession. He would have admitted that he "traveled light" and that his quarters were "snug," but he liked things that way. He never left his room without hanging a printed card on his door: "*On the Premises. Return in Ten Minutes. Matthew Noon.*"

This, as he explained one day to Ben Hallett, was to discourage burglars. "If they think you're not far away they're not likely to attempt to rob you." Hallett went upstairs marveling at his fellow-lodger's foresight and vowing to do the same to his door. But Hallett, impractical musician, never got around to it, somehow. . . .

The casual visitor to Noon's room would have at once been impressed by the extraordinary number of royal families on the walls. Besides the maps—hung for pedagogical purposes—photographs of royalty were the sole item of mural adornment. There was hardly a reigning—or recently reigning

—house in Europe that was not represented: King Gustave of Sweden and his voluminous household, King Alphonso of Spain, the late Czar, the Empress of Roumania, Prince Albert of Belgium and King George and Queen Mary.

Ben Fulda, who paused at Noon's door one evening, inquired sarcastically why he plastered his walls like an exiled royalist. Noon promptly replied that it was nobody's business, shouting that at any rate he believed in law and order and didn't propose to "consort with a lot of half-baked artists." Fulda passed on with a contemptuous smile. Later, in recounting the incident to the sympathetic Hallett, Noon explained the true *raison d'être* for his royalist gallery. He kept the photographs in his room, he said, for perfectly practical, professional reasons.

"I put them up on the walls," he explained, "because my scholars belong to different nationalities, and to see their own monarchs pictured there makes them feel at home. I have a Russian, a Spaniard, an Italian, a native of Athens. I've seen many a foreigner's eye light up when he recognized the picture of his own ruler. It makes them more comfortable in alien surroundings."

III

THE difficulty over the bathroom key really started on account of Orville Kincaid. In the matter of his personal cleanliness Kincaid was fastidious, even exigent. In a sense, however, this meticulousness was a professional necessity, for he worked as a model for various artists and posed often in the nude.

Kincaid lived upstairs and was supposed, in all strictness, to perform his ablutions in the top-floor bathroom. But the instantaneous heater had proved too quick for him one morning while lighting it in preparation for his bath, and he got his bushy eyebrows badly singed. Since that time nothing could have persuaded him to light the upstairs burner again.

Over and over again Kincaid had been advised that the lower-floor bathroom was for the lower-floor tenants. Most virulent in denouncing his poaching was Matthew Noon. Kincaid's interminable occupancy of the bathroom, Noon said, threw his whole morning "out of kilter." With unfailing regularity Noon breakfasted at nine o'clock. Immediately after his morning meal Noon would gather up his dirty dishes and repair to the bathroom tap to wash them. But after Kincaid began using the downstairs bathroom this procedure was impossible.

Noon would find the door locked and hear Orville Kincaid splashing about inside, singing in a nasal tenor his unvarying lyric, "Un Peu D'Amour." This meant that Noon was unable to wash his breakfast dishes until early afternoon, for his first pupil arrived at ten. All morning, while expounding on the capriccios of English grammar to his bewildered foreigners, Noon would be enraged by the thought of his greasy, egg-stained dishes hidden away under his cot bed. A mounting, homicidal fury against Kincaid rose up in Noon, kept whitely alive by the fact that, for nearly an hour, the muffled sound of "Un Peu D'Amour" could be heard floating down the hall from the bathroom.

In the violent manner that overcame him when he was excited, Noon confronted Kincaid. Instead of stopping to argue, that blasé gentleman whistled his sentimental French song and trailed his faded cerise dressing-gown indifferently by. His morning occupancy of the forbidden bathroom continued as before. . . .

Noon enlisted Mrs. Lovell and she also spoke to the artists' model but without avail. Threatening notes, couched in Noon's majestic periods, were left at Kincaid's door. Kincaid scarcely read them. For the inmates of the Avon Studios, individually and collectively, he had an illimitable contempt. He thought them all a lot of riff-raff, insensitive to beauty, ungodly, dirty. . . .

After a week of this outrage Noon went to Mrs. Lovell and demanded that she take action against the trespasser. Mrs. Lovell said that under the circumstances she really could do nothing. In a quarrel between her roomers Mrs. Lovell could not take sides. And Mr. Kincaid, for all his disregard of unwritten laws, was a most desirable roomer. He was never, she added significantly, even one day behind in his rent.

For another week Noon wrestled with the irritating problem. He considered moving. In fact, he was actually on the point of giving notice to Mrs. Lovell when he realized that such a step for him was impossible. His pupils were accustomed to coming to West 36th Street. It was always a bad plan to change one's address; one invariably lost thereby. Another thing, in the summer months when pupils were few and far between Mrs. Lovell did meet his long lapses in rent payment with a certain crabbed tolerance.

Out of his despair Noon evolved an idea, which he laid before Mrs. Lovell with a sort of forensic elaborateness. He spoke of equity, of "inalienable rights"; he invoked the image of a white and shining Justice. His eloquence persuaded Mrs. Lovell to realize his plan:—to wit, to keep the lower bathroom door locked and to give keys only to the occupants of that floor. It was this decision which culminated in a crisis for Miss Timme. . . .

Noon was so delighted with his triumph over the "open door" question that he celebrated by going across the street to O'Brien's saloon to get himself a glass of real beer. Noon would stand at the bar for hours chatting about "the Other Side" with Higgins, the Cockney barkeep. These interludes at O'Brien's—indulgences which Noon couldn't afford very often—were his only dissipation. With Higgins, Noon would unbend, voice his political convictions, denounce Prohibition, reminisce over his own vanished distinctions. In London, as a young man, Noon had had charge of the maps in a department of the

British Museum. To attest to that fact, he still kept a shiny photograph of himself sitting at a severely ordered desk, looking very official. To the solicitous bartender Noon would tell of his various contacts with Campbell-Bannerman, under whose consulship he had worked in the English Museum, contacts which were confined mainly to hand-shakings after public meetings. Once, even, when quite young, Noon had seen Gladstone get out of his carriage during his final tenancy at Downing Street.

To Higgins, too, Noon would express his opinion of women, voice his fierce misogyny. Against the various females who had crossed his path in the Avon Studios Noon poured the phials of his indignation. And during his feud with Miss Timme there was a virulence in his outbursts which made even the callous Higgins look at his customer with distaste.

IV

ON the morning following the distribution of the keys to the lower-floor tenants, Noon, going confidently to the bathroom with his breakfast dishes found it locked. And from inside as usual emanated Orville Kincaid's passionate, nasal tenor:

*"Murmuray, toot bah, toot bah.
Je tay—a-a-muh. . . .! . . .!"*

Kincaid had learned his French from a piece of sheet-music which printed both the original and English words.

Noon stood before the locked door in dumb fury. He did not even pound. He was too amazed, too upset. . . .

The next morning the phenomenon was repeated. Noon went to Mrs. Lovell and told her that she was being betrayed, that there was a traitor in the Avon Studios. Mrs. Lovell said she had done all that could be expected of her when she spent a dollar for four keys. She washed her hands of the whole affair.

That night Matthew Noon did not sleep well. How had Orville Kincaid

got into the bathroom? Was it possible that he had a pass-key? Or was someone admitting him? Noon knew that Doc Slavin next door would have nothing to do with Kincaid. Daisy Schraider? Certainly not she. Daisy made no effort to conceal her contempt for the model; she was always mimicking him, the way he walked and talked, the way he preened himself in front of the hall mirror. Miss Timme? Noon decided to find out for himself.

Watching through his slightly open door on the morning after his sleepless night, he beheld, after what seemed to him interminable waiting, Kincaid coming jauntily downstairs in his cerise bathrobe, carrying a Turkish towel and leather toilet-case. Kincaid rapped lightly at Miss Timme's door. After a moment Miss Timme opened her door and, after a few words which Noon could not hear, handed him a key—her bathroom key!

Noon flung open his door with an oath; Miss Timme, her face suddenly gray with shock, snapped her door shut and locked it. Kincaid, beautifully imperturbable, looked straight at Noon as though he weren't there and disappeared in the bathroom, whistling a snatch of "Un Peu d'Amour." . . .

But for some reason it was not against Kincaid that Noon's anger beat. It was against Miss Timme. He raged down the hall and beat his fists upon her door. His blue eyes, gleaming fanatically, protruded from his face; his scalp reddened under his downy gray hairs. He stormed and threatened. He would notify the authorities, he would see to it that Miss Timme be placed in an asylum where she belonged. But from Miss Timme's room came no sound.

From that moment Noon began to formulate in his mind a series of reprisals against her. For one thing he made Miss Timme return his gas stove.

Some months before, Noon had been feeling unaccountable ill. Sitting in his room he would feel his head grow heavy and his body limp. He would find himself leaning over his desk for hours in

a semi-stupor. One day Doc Slavin dropped in to see him. He sniffed the air critically, and then examined Noon's gas stove, which heated the room.

"My God, man," he exclaimed, "look at that yellow flame! Don't you know you're slowly poisoning yourself with gas?"

The doctor went on to explain that through some faulty mechanism the gas and air were not mixing properly. It was merely a matter of time before Noon would asphyxiate himself.

Noon was so frightened that he went out at once and bought a new gas stove. The old one he put in Mrs. Lovell's storage closet. This was in October. Miss Timme, who had not yet bought a heater, asked Mrs. Lovell whether she might not borrow the discarded stove if she paid for putting in a new mixer. Mrs. Lovell, who foresaw that she would have a decently working stove after Miss Timme's departure—Mrs. Lovell always visualized the departure of her roomers—readily consented. Noon heard about this transfer at the time and grumbled, but did nothing. Now, however, he demanded the return of his property.

Noon pounded savagely upon Miss Timme's door, his voice filling the house. Doors opened and heads stuck out.

"I tell you I want my gas stove!" shouted Noon.

After an interval the door opened and Miss Timme appeared. She said nothing, but pointed to the stove, which she had disconnected while Noon was pounding. One got a glimpse of the furnishing of her room: a small, warped table, an iron cot, some nondescript clothing hung on the wall. On the table, beside a half-eaten loaf of bread, was a battered train of cars, which Lionel played with on his visits to Miss Timme. Noon, muttering to himself, picked up his stove and carried it out. Miss Timme closed and locked her door.

The loss of the gas heater was serious for Miss Timme. It was known that she was hard up and behind in her

rent. Ben Hallett, the pianist, offered to lend her the money with which to buy a new heater, but she refused vehemently and slammed the door in his face.

Ben was perplexed by the way she met this kindness. Matthew Noon told him that the woman was insane and vicious. Ben remained unconvinced. He felt dimly that perhaps Miss Timme had become embittered by her consciousness of the hatred and suspicion with which she was regarded by the others. Ben tried to express something of this to Noon.

"Why don't she get out then?" inquired the usher of St. Gregory's. "Why don't she go where she belongs—to the insane ward?"

It was understood around the Studios also that it was after a long talk with Noon that Mrs. Lovell decided that it was not safe to allow her son Lionel to go into Miss Timme's room to play. Lionel did not relinquish his play evenings with Miss Timme without a great protest. It was only his mother's threat of a severe spanking that kept him away. . . .

V

As time went on, Noon's hatred of Miss Timme became less vocal, but none the less intense. One morning during Miss Timme's absence at the delicatessen a miraculous stroke of luck came to Noon. He was tacking his little sign on his door preparatory to going over to O'Brien's for a glass of beer, when the pimply-faced young man who came once a week to bring Miss Timme's embroidery work appeared on the landing. Noon had an inspiration. . . .

"Want to see Miss Timme, I suppose?" he inquired casually.

"Sure, whatja think I hoofed up all them stairs for?" replied the young man, panting.

"Well, too bad you've had all that climb for nothing," said Noon. "Miss Timme doesn't live here any more."

"The hell you say!"

S. S.—April—6

"She moved yesterday," continued Noon, with a chuckle; "I guess she didn't appreciate her friends here."

The young man turned to go down the steps.

"Didn't she leave no address?"

Noon shook his head.

"Well," replied the young man, "wait till I tell the boss this! That old frau has sewed on her last shirt for our factory! I always say you can't count on a woman in business—love either, for that matter."

With that the young man took a fresh grip on his boxes and descended the stairs.

That time Noon was extravagant at O'Brien's. He ordered two beers.

VI

Two nights later Matthew Noon sat in his room waiting for Manuel Gonzales, his star pupil. Manuel was a Brazilian, who held an important post in an importing house on lower Broadway. He paid Noon two dollars an hour for his tutelage, which was twice the customary fee. Gonzales always came at eight o'clock. Noon had never known him to be late. This time he did not come at all, and the tutor was experiencing a sort of panic. . . .

At a quarter to nine the telephone rang in the hall upstairs. Mrs. Lovell called down to Noon that Mr. Gonzales wished to speak with him on the phone. Quite angrily Manuel told Noon he had come to the house at his usual hour, but that he had found the street door locked. Noon protested that this could not be, because the front door was never locked until eleven o'clock. That was the rule and custom of the Avon Studios. Gonzales insisted that the door was, nevertheless, locked. Moreover, a strange-looking woman had been sitting on the stairs and had motioned him away. He had seen her through the glass panel.

Noon apologized humbly for this mishap and begged Gonzales to come the next evening at the same hour for his lesson. This Gonzales promised

to do. Then Noon hurried downstairs. To his bewilderment the front door was unlocked. There was no strange-looking woman there. But later, on investigation, he discovered that Pop Farley, who had come in not long before, had found the door locked and Miss Timme sitting on the stairs.

After a struggle with himself Noon at last decided to say nothing. He would be more cunning.

The next evening, at seven-thirty, he went downstairs and hid behind some empty packing cases belonging to the New Idea Fixture Company. At ten minutes to eight he heard the flapping, shuffling sound that belonged unmistakably to Miss Timme's walk. She crept past him along the corridor and on down the stairs.

Noon peered out from his hiding-place on the landing and watched her. He saw her turn the lock in the street door. Then she sat on the steps, waiting. . . .

In a white rage Noon descended on her. She did not move. Her immobility almost frightened him. Her face was the face of a person obsessed. For the first time Noon really believed that Miss Timme might be crazy.

"What do you mean by locking that door?" he cried. "You insane devil!"

Miss Timme laughed and spat at him.

Noon unlocked the door and dashed out on the street. A moment later he returned with a policeman.

"There she sits, the crazy loon!" he shouted.

There, indeed, Miss Timme sat.

"What's the idea o' all this?" asked the policeman, turning his electric flash in her face.

Miss Timme's throat and hands twitched convulsively.

"I'm doing no more than he did to me!" she gasped, pointing to Noon.

"What's she talkin' about?" the policeman demanded of Noon.

"I tell you, officer, she's crazy—off her base!"

"I'm not crazy," wailed Miss Timme. "I'm not! I lost my work because of

him. He told them I moved. I got no more work! . . ."

"She ought to be put under lock and key!" expostulated Noon.

By this time the stairs were filled with Mrs. Lovell's tenants, among them Mrs. Lovell herself. There was a little knot of people on the sidewalk also.

Noon's voice dominated the situation. Miss Timme had risen and stood pressed against the wall. She succeeded only in making little gasping noises every time she tried to speak. With her hands she kept touching her throat and bosom and pulling downwards at her skirt.

Manuel Gonzales appeared for his appointment. Noon hailed him.

"Is this the person?" Noon pointed dramatically at Miss Timme, "who wouldn't let you in last night?"

Gonzales stared at her a moment, then nodded.

"And this door was locked last night when you came for your lesson?" Noon went on.

Gonzales nodded again.

"It's all right, officer," interposed Mrs. Lovell, anxious to break up the crowd before her door, "I can take care of this lady all right."

The policeman was bored.

"Better get rid of her," he advised, and went outside, dispersing the crowd.

Mrs. Lovell turned to Miss Timme indignantly.

"What do you mean, Miss Timme," she said, "starting a street brawl!"

"It's no more than he did to me!" cried Miss Timme, gesticulating aimlessly.

"I don't know anything about that. But you get out of my house tonight. It's not enough that you owe me two weeks' rent, but you got to disgrace us all by getting a policeman here for locking the doors on our guests!"

Miss Timme began to climb the stairs. Her overlong skirts whipped loudly, and her staccato breathing had the ludicrous sound people make when they are about to sneeze.

VII

DUE to the intervention of Ben Hallett, Mrs. Lovell did not insist on Miss Timme's leaving that night, though Noon expressed the opinion that it was dangerous to pass the night in the Avon Studios while Miss Timme was there.

The next morning, while it was still quite early, Miss Timme departed. She had packed all her belongings in a worn straw suit-case.

Matthew Noon assisted at her departure. As she shuffled down the stairs he leaned over the balustrade with a valedictory remark.

"Good riddance!"

There was no outward evidence that Miss Timme heard. She shuffled down the stairs one step at a time. . . .

VIII

BUT in the ointment of Noon's triumph there was a fly. Orville Kincaid had not returned the bathroom key to Miss Timme at the time of the row on the stairs. He continued to bathe and perfume himself each morning in the lower floor bathroom, singing all the while, in quaint French, his song of little loves and diminutive kisses.

Perhaps it was this legacy of inconvenience left behind by Miss Timme that kept green Noon's vindictiveness. Perhaps it was this which accounted for the gratification with which he received a piece of news that came to him a few nights later.

He was sitting at his desk with his pupil, Manuel Gonzales, explaining to him the uses of the perfect infinitive. He had just advised the perplexed Brazilian that the perfect infinitive is employed to express action preceding that of the principal verb, when Ben Hallett knocked at his door.

Hallett carried a newspaper. His face was grave.

"Look at this, Noon."

He pointed to an obscure item in the paper.

From it Noon learned that one Ellen Timme, a native of Hamburg, Germany, had committed suicide by asphyxiation in a cheap rooming-house on Third Avenue.

Noon handed the paper back to Hallett. His eyes gleamed. He struck the table with his fist.

"Didn't I tell you she was a lunatic!" he cried. "Good riddance! That's what I say—good riddance! . . ."



Theological Reminiscence

By Wayne Saunders

THERE is nothing very humorous about attending a Baptist revival. There is nothing very humorous about contemplating a crowd of middle-aged congenital idiots playing marbles. There is nothing very humorous about watching six men in a rowboat trying to stop the leaks with cotton.



INSTINCT—the faculty which tells a woman whether a man needs enticement or encouragement.



“R. S. V. P.”

By Donald Bellows

YOU would have me come for tea? Very well. Yet it is good that you should know who it is that you ask—for I have heard the insane laughter at the heart of life, and no man who has heard that is ever again the same. Do you know what it is to watch the amused and smiling irony of things grow full of itself, until it bursts into a screaming laughter? Be sure I do not mean the great pitying laughter for life because it is so pitiful; but the insane laughter of a great irony gone mad with its own genius. There have been men who have heard it before, and they have said that it was the voice of demons, out of hell. But that is not true. It is the voice of the genius at the heart of life. This I have heard.

And I have witnessed the falling away of masks—wherein the world is seen as a grotesque phantasmagoria, and souls as gargoyles nourished on life's refuse. It is an unforgettable vision. And for him who has seen, masks are never again impenetrable. Indeed, for him, there are masks no more. He knows what he has seen.

Shall I come to your drawing-room at five? And hear in your house that laughter, and see in your house that vision? The purring voices will not soften the one. . . . I shall hear beyond them. And the silk gown and the fair flesh will not veil the other. . . . I shall see beyond them.

Your tea will be a monstrous thing. For there life will stalk, naked, and hideous, and loud with insane laughter.

At five, then.



Revelation

By Luis Muñoz Marin

I

I HAVE lost you in a fog of perfect words.

II

*In a clear, swift music of meaningless words
I hope for you.*

A Quiet Evening

By John Torcross

SCENE: A club.

TIME: 7:45 P.M.

CHARACTERS

HARRY
JIM

HARRY

Hello, Jim! What's on your mind?
How about a little dinner?

JIM

You're on, Harry. And first you'll
have a cocktail with me, eh?

HARRY

I certainly will. What a relief it is
to have nothing to do for one night.
No parties. No girls to see. No stay-
ing up all hours.

JIM

Funny, I was thinking the very same
thing. I swore I wouldn't go out to-
night for anything in the world.

HARRY

Well, here's to a quiet evening, Jim.

JIM

The same to you, old boy.

HARRY

Haven't seen you around the club re-
cently.

JIM

No, I've been working pretty hard.
Haven't had much time. Feel sort of
tired in the evenings lately.

HARRY

Well, as a matter of fact, this is the
first time I've been in this week.

JIM

Busy, too, eh?

HARRY

Now this one's on me this time, Jim.
Same kind?

JIM

Little more vermouth in mine. Yes,
it's a great feeling not to have to trot
out this evening.

HARRY

You bet it is. I know exactly what
you mean.

JIM

An easy night for me, I say.

HARRY

That's where I'm with you. Down
your old wooden leg, James!

JIM

Lookin', Harry.

HARRY

That just hits the right spot. As good
a snifter as I've gargled in a long while.

JIM

A fellow doesn't 'preciate a quiet
evening any more, does he, Harry?
Everyone's on the rush all the time,
nowadays.

HARRY

That's it. On the rush all the time.
No one seems to be able to keep still a
second.

JIM

Nope. And what beats a quiet evening with a good cigar and a drink?

HARRY

Nothing in the whole world. Say, shall we have one more?

JIM

I don't see why not. A quick one, eh?

HARRY

All this business of tearing all over town, dancing, carrying on, and staying up late is all rot when you come to think of it, isn't it?

JIM

Pure bosh. Just waste of time.

HARRY

Here's how, Jim. Glad I ran into you.

JIM

Same here, old boy.

HARRY

Mighty nice room, this. Don't see why it isn't used more. Comf'table chairs. Pretty pictures. Papers. Mag'-zines.

JIM

Yes, it's beautiful room. Trouble is nobody 'preciates what's nice. They haven't time. Always on the go.

HARRY

That's right. Always on the go. The club isn't used as much as it ought to be.

JIM

Damn shame.

HARRY

I'm coming 'round more often.

JIM

So'm I.

HARRY

It's such a nice place.

JIM

Couldn't be nicer. Everything's nice 'bout it. Say, do you think we ought to—er—

HARRY

Well, I will if you will.

JIM

I'll go you. They certainly know how to shake 'em up, don't they?

HARRY

Oh, this boy knows his business.

JIM

I'm beginning to feel myself again.

HARRY

You're lookin' better.

JIM

So are you.

HARRY

Pretty color. Nice and cold too. Over the river!

JIM

Hap' days.
(*There is a slight pause.*)

HARRY

Say, Jim, would you 'scuse me second? Jus' 'member I mus' tel'phone.

JIM

Why, so've I. Glad you 'minded me, Harry.

(*Both HARRY and JIM sojourn to telephone booths and ultimately get their respective numbers.*)

HARRY

(*over telephone*)

I'll call for you at quart' t' nine, m' dear.

JIM

(*over telephone*)

Aw' ri, Gladys. Meet you top o' stairs, near door.
(*Excunt both from telephone booths*)

HARRY AND JIM

(*simultaneously*)

Mighty sorry, ol' man, but I've got mos' 'portant business meeting. Ver' sudden but mos' 'portant. See you soon 'gain, ol' boy.

The Best Husbands

By Marian Spitzer

I

ISAAC GOLDWATER pushed his chair back from the dining-room table, breathed a long, audible sigh, and shook out his napkin before his face.

"Pardon me," he said, drawing a quill toothpick from his low waistcoat pocket. "That dentist certainly did a rotten job. I'll have to go back and raise hell with him."

A faraway expression in his eyes, Mr. Goldwater gave himself up to his nightly task. The operation completed, he folded up his napkin, replaced the toothpick in his waistcoat pocket and addressed his wife.

"Well," he said jovially, "what's on your mind? Whenever you start drumming like that I know you're stewing about something. What's the trouble?"

Millie Goldwater looked at him reproachfully as she abandoned for the moment a nervous rapping of her fingers on the table.

"It's no laughing matter," she answered.

Mrs. Goldwater could never be accurately described as saying anything. She always screamed it, or yelled it. Her voice was high and brassy, and gave, strangely, the impression of being both sharp and flat at the same time. She was a thin woman, with a sharp, nervous face, a long nose and a leathery skin, matched in color by her thin, straight hair.

"It's no laughing matter, Goldwater," she repeated, "and I wish you'd try to take something seriously for once in

your life. I guess you wouldn't like it so much if your only child brought disgrace on you."

The smile was wiped from her husband's face as though her words had been a sponge.

"What do you mean, disgrace?" he demanded anxiously. "What has she been doing? And where is she, anyway?"

"That's just it," shrilled Mrs. Goldwater, her jaw quivering. "She's out bumming again with that Terry Armstrong. Every night for a week she has a date with this Terry Armstrong. And she had him here the other night when we were at the Weinbergs' for dinner. Lizzie told me they were sitting in the living-room with only one lamp lit. Kissing. That's what they were doing. To think that a daughter of mine should sit in a dark room kissing a *Shaegitz*! After the way I brought that girl up! Ike, you'll have to speak to her. You see where your ideas of let-'em-alone-and-they'll-be-all-right get you! A fine how-do-you-do! I never wanted her to begin with him. Terry Armstrong. *Auch* a name. Like a movie actor. What she sees in him I can't imagine. A forty-dollar-a-week reporter. A Bohemian, who lives in Greenwich Village. A boy like Leon Jacoby ain't good enough for her—he hasn't got a college education. Believe me, I'm sorry I ever let that girl go to college. That's the way: give your children an education and they know more than you do. I can't stand any more of this nonsense. You'll have to talk to her. Tonight!"

She stopped to catch her breath, and

Isaac Goldwater took advantage of the pause.

"Well," he said, "I'm glad that's all. The way you acted I thought the girl had murdered somebody. I'll speak to her, though. It ain't a good idea for her to run around so much with Gentile fellows. It's all right if they're just friends, but the first thing you know, they get stuck on each other, and then where are you? You're right, Millie, I'll speak to her tonight."

When Roslyn Goldwater came in shortly after midnight, she found her father waiting up for her. She was pleased, although it seemed a little unusual. Roslyn was exceedingly fond of her father, not, merely, as she often tried to explain to him, because he was a good father, but because he was a nice person. Mr. Goldwater couldn't exactly see the distinction, but he sensed a complimentary thought behind it.

"Well," she said, as she kissed him, "this is a great honor. But it looks a little suspicious. In the movies stern parents don't wait up for their daughters unless there's going to be a scene."

Mr. Goldwater looked slightly embarrassed. He cleared his throat.

"No," he said, smiling in a somewhat shamefaced manner, "I don't expect any scene. Your mamma's gone to bed and I think we can settle this business without her. I've got to talk to you about something."

"What a young girl ought to know?"

"Well, in a way, yes." Mr. Goldwater tried to keep his tone light. Twenty-five years of scenes had not accustomed him to them. "It's about this Terry Armstrong feller. Your mamma feels that you've been seeing him too much lately. To tell the truth, I think so myself. Armstrong's a nice boy, but he ain't."

"He isn't Jewish. I know it. Are you going to begin that again?" Roslyn shrugged her shoulders and a weary, petulant note came into her voice. "Because if you are, I might as well tell you now there's no use. Terry's the nicest boy I know, and I'm going to keep right

on knowing him. I can't see what possible difference it makes whether he's Jewish or not. He could be a Buddhist and it wouldn't make any difference to me."

"That's all very well for casual acquaintances," answered Mr. Goldwater heavily, "but not when it applies to a man you see practically every day. The first thing you know you'll fall in love with the feller, and then look at the trouble there'll be."

"What trouble could there be?" asked Roslyn. "If I fell in love with him, I'd marry him. That would be simple enough. I've often thought of it."

Her father looked at her incredulously.

"Are you serious?" he demanded

"Certainly?"

"You know perfectly well it wouldn't do at all," he said. "Never let yourself even dream of such a thing! If you really mean it, then there's all the more reason for your cutting that Terry out. You could never marry him, and if you see you're getting too fond of him, stop the thing before it goes too far."

Roslyn swallowed hard and put a hand up to her throat, a characteristic gesture of hers under excitement.

"But father," she said, "I can't get your point of view. If you were the least bit religious I could understand, but you've never looked inside a temple since grandmamma died, and as for mother, she goes only because she has a good time and meets people she knows. So, really, I can't see your slant at all. Not that I have any intention of marrying Terry tomorrow or next week. But I think your reason is such a silly one."

"It may seem a silly one to you, but that is only because you are very young. I tell you, Rosie, even though I ain't religious I would never allow you to marry outside your own faith. It's wrong. No good ever comes of it."

Heavy footsteps down the hall announced the coming of Mrs. Goldwater. She entered the library angrily, clad in a nightgown and an orchid negligee, with her brownish hair hanging in two

thin braids as far as her shoulders. Her eyes were blinking from the sudden light, but her voice was wide awake and active.

"I can't even sleep in my own house," she complained. "It's too bad you can't talk without making such a racket. Well, is she going to stop running around with that young Bohemian, or ain't she? I tell you it's no pleasure to have children nowadays."

"I was just telling father," said Roslyn quietly, "that I couldn't see any reason for not marrying Terry if I felt like it."

"My God," declared Mrs. Goldwater dramatically, "you're not thinking of marrying him! I knew it, I knew it. I never wanted you to start anything with him. That's the way those things always turn out."

"But," said Roslyn, "you haven't any religion, so what's the difference?"

"It ain't a question of religion. It's like mixing oil and water. I can't understand it. For seven years she's the prize pupil in Sunday-school, and goes to temple every Saturday, and now she wants to marry a *goy*! How long do you think you'd be happy, answer me that? Could he give you a home like you're used to on his forty dollars a week?"

"Fifty," stubbornly.

"All right, fifty. What's the difference? It might as well be ten. And mark my words, it'll never be no more. Gentle men don't know how to take care of their wives. It's all right for them to marry their own kind; those girls expect it and they're willing to slave for their husbands. But a Jewish girl, used to a good home, to marry one of them? No! They ain't good providers. They drink. If they have to choose between giving something to their wives and getting something for themselves, they look out for number one. And they run around with other women."

"Besides," put in Mr. Goldwater gravely, "you must think of the future. It might be all right for a while, if you were very fond of each other. But supposing you had children. What would

you do then? There's the rub. You'd want them to go to temple and he'd want them to go to church."

"No, he wouldn't," answered Roslyn, "and neither would I. Your argument is ridiculous. If I had any children they could choose their own religion. Anyway, you're premature, aren't you?"

"Well," Mrs. Goldwater cut in, "if you haven't got enough sense to think about your own future, your parents have to do it for you. It isn't only the children. Suppose you had a quarrel, what would he do? I know. He'd call you a dirty Jew, and how would you like that? I tell you such marriages never turn out well. I insist you give up that fellow. You'd break my heart if you married him. Why, I could never be friendly with him. Think of what people would say. They talk about you enough as it is, with your advanced ideas that you learned in college. No respect for your parents. Anything to be different. Why can't you be like other nice respectable Jewish girls, and marry some fine young fellow from a good family, who can support you like you're accustomed to? Someone like Leon Jacoby. It's a wonder to me that he bothers with you any more, you treat him so badly. Any sensible girl would be glad to get him."

"Mother," said Roslyn grandly, "has it ever occurred to you that perhaps I would like to love the man I marry?"

Mrs. Goldwater snorted.

"Love!" she exclaimed. "You can learn to love any man if he treats you right. Get it out of your head that marriage is romantic like the movies. A girl can learn to love a man after she's married to him. Do you think you'd love a man long if he couldn't provide for you? Suppose you had to do all your own work and had a lot of children to take care of?"

Roslyn laughed a trifle hysterically.

"For heaven's sake, mother, let's cut this out. I'll do anything to avoid arguing. I'll even cut out Terry, if that'll

make you happy. And," under her breath, "shut you up."

She walked out of the room.

II

IN bed she thought the thing over. She would stop seeing Terry, she decided. Nothing was worth all this friction, not even Terry, much as she liked him. But she wouldn't make a scene with him. No renunciation. She would just gradually ease out of the thing. It was simple, if you really wanted to do it. She'd managed to get rid of loads of boys without hurting their feelings.

She was really awfully fond of Terry. But she had never seriously thought about him as a husband. It was only when her mother started the row that it had occurred to her, and she had followed it up. Mostly to annoy her mother, she admitted to herself. Funny, how her mother roused the imp of perversity in her. In everybody, as a matter of fact. Roslyn often wondered about her mother. She loved her in a filial way, but she felt pretty sure that if they met as strangers she wouldn't care for her at all. Her mother had done a lot for her, though, and she mustn't make her unhappy.

Of course, if she really wanted to make her mother happy, she would marry Leon Jacoby, whose parents were friendly with the Goldwaters, and who was considered an exceptionally eligible young man. He was vice-president of his father's prosperous insurance brokerage, possessed of a big income and an inclination to spend money lavishly where it would show. As a boy Leon had spent a year at Phillips Exeter Academy, and felt that you could tell an Exeter man anywhere. There was that little something about their manner—a certain intangible aloofness—that set them apart from other people. This was especially true of Leon, who felt keenly his responsibility toward maintaining the Exeter standard.

After leaving Exeter, Leon had en-

rolled at Columbia, but he did not care particularly for the boys there,—they were rather second rate, he felt,—and his mother did not want him away from home again, so he gave up the idea of a college career, and went into his father's business, where he made good immediately.

He had met Roslyn at Walter Wolfson's twenty-fifth birthday party, and had felt at once an attraction strong, though not violent, an attraction that had survived seven years of vicissitudes. From the first his parents and hers had encouraged the friendship, and Roslyn, following the line of least resistance, had kept up a desultory and entirely casual relationship with him. She knew that she could marry him at any time, although he had never formally asked her to. Lots of times he had said things that wanted only a little encouragement on her part to develop into a real proposal. But she had never made the slightest move toward encouragement. Leon was fundamentally a kind person, she felt, but rather ridiculous. And she couldn't bear the way he glowered at waiters.

Now she had determined to give up Terry. She smiled a little to herself as she used the locution. It sounded so dramatic. But anyway she was going to eliminate him, and that would leave rather a hole in her daily life. Terry had come to be a rather taken-for-granted part of it. She wondered just what would come along to fill up the gap. Something would. It always did. In and out of Roslyn's existence wandered a slender but continuous stream of men. She was a pretty girl with rather lovely blue eyes, and a slim figure. When she compared weights with the girls of her set she was invariably the lightest by at least ten pounds. She danced well, too, and could always talk and listen intelligently to anything the men were talking about at the moment. So she was always accompanied, if not surrounded, by men. And she lay awake wondering who would follow Terry and whether he would be amusing.

III

SHE found out sooner than she expected. It was less than a week after her decision about Terry that she met Rienzi deSola. Leon Jacoby called her up to remind her of an engagement, and incidentally to ask whether he might bring along a business acquaintance named deSola.

"I have a big deal on with him," Leon told her. "He's been here from Spain quite a few months, but he doesn't know any girls. Nice girls, I mean. You ought to like him, he's very lit'r'ry."

Leon always said lit'r'ry and secr't'ry. It was more intellectual, he felt. DeSola, he went on, had seen Roslyn's picture in his house, and asked to meet her. He was a queer fellow, Leon said, born in America of Spanish-Jewish parents. One of the oldest Jewish families in America, the deSolos. Very cultured. His mother was an active worker in the Spanish Synagogue. He'd spent the last five years abroad in charge of the foreign branch of his father's business, and had only recently come back.

"You'd never suspect him of being American," Leon said. "He looks just like Valentino, and he has an odd way of talking. Not on accent, exactly, but funny little mannerisms. You ought to enjoy him."

Roslyn thought she would. He sounded a little tricky, she reflected, but anyway, he'd be different from the boys she'd gone to Sunday-school with, with their all-of-a-pattern manners, clothes and minds. He'd probably been sent by Providence as a reward for her great renunciation. She laughed at herself and told Leon to bring him along.

She was amused when she saw him. Amused at Leon's bracketing him with Valentino. He would, she thought. Any one who was dark and striking-looking would look to Leon like Valentino. He looked a great deal more, it seemed to her, like a Velasquez painting. His face was almost perfectly triangular, with cavernous cheeks, and deep-set, smouldering eyes. A high-bridged, thin nose

carried out the look of race that was his most striking characteristic. She liked him for that and for his courtly manners. He seemed a bit contemptuous, secretly, of Leon. She liked him for that, too. It showed that he had judgment. His voice was low, and he spoke slowly, with great deliberation. Some people might have found his speech too monotonous, but Roslyn subconsciously welcomed anything that was a vocal relief from her mother.

His admiration for her was immediate and patent, although conveyed in a manner so subtle as to rob it of any possible touch of forwardness. They went to the theatre and danced afterward. She liked his dancing, which was subtle, like the rest of him.

Occasionally and with extreme casualness he spoke of a book or a play. His comment was always intelligent, according to Roslyn's lights. After the two men had left her she compared them. How crude Leon seemed beside this person. For that matter, how crude all the men she knew seemed beside him. Excepting Terry. But he was so different. There was nothing quite like a New York newspaper man. He had a flavor all his own. Terry was subtle enough of mind, but not of manner, like Rienzi.

A lovely name, she thought, saying it over to herself. Rienzi deSola. Mrs. Rienzi—she blushed hotly at her thought. How absurd of her. Just like all other girls, after all, even though she was always taking conscious pride in her difference. What a worthless person she must be, to be capable of even thinking that way. But he did have charm, certainly. She smiled lazily to herself as she undressed. He would call her up, she felt sure.

He did—the next morning, which was sooner than she expected. Exulting a little, she made an engagement for luncheon for the following day. She drove downtown, and called for him at his place of business, a brokerage office in the Wall Street section. They lunched at the Café Savarin, where the waiters all appeared to know him. He ordered

a perfect meal, during which he talked gravely of many inconsequential things. He had a fund of little anecdotes about the Spanish literati, which he told entertainingly, with his gaze fastened on her all the while.

Listening attentively to his stories of Jacinte Benevente and the Quinteres, and of Blasco Ibañez, for whom he had nothing but jeers, she was at the same time amused at her own reactions to his unwavering stare. If she were the heroine of a novel, she told herself, she would at this moment be acutely aware that his gaze penetrated her clothes and saw her naked body. His eyes were like that. Only she didn't feel that way at all. She had met that staring line before, and it didn't bother her in the least. Things like that were effective only if the subject didn't understand them.

The luncheon was the first of a rapid succession of engagements during which Terry drifted gently and by easy stages toward the background. The engagements were varied—tea, dinner, theatre. Sometimes they stayed at home and talked. He did that well. His charm was great and he captivated Roslyn's imagination. He captivated her mother's imagination, too. Mrs. Goldwater had been making some investigations.

"Well," she said to Roslyn, one evening while they were waiting for Rienzi to call for her, "you see, there *are* Jewish men you can like. It ain't necessary to hang around with good-for-nothing Gentiles. You seem to think that no Jews have any culture or refinement. Well, you're wrong. I think Mr. deSola is a grand young man. Not too young and not too old. Substantial. Jewish men make the best husbands. He comes from a very good family, too. I was talking to Mrs. Jacoby the other day. She met his parents at a dinner. They're very fine people, although they put on a lot of airs. His mother acted to her just as though she was a kike or something objectionable. I'd just like to see them try to get away with anything like that on me. I'd tell 'em something.

We're as good as they are any day, even if they are Spanish. Something to be stuck up about!"

Suddenly her tone changed, and became pleading. She spoke as softly as it was possible for her to speak.

"Darling," she said eagerly, applying her elbow to Roslyn's ribs, "if he asks you will you take him? Please make your mother happy for once. You're not such a kid any more—twenty-four—you won't get many more chances. And you certainly can't object to him. Think how proud it would make me. And all those catty women who say things about you would have to shut up then. How it would aggravate them if you made a good match!"

Roslyn did not answer, but patted her mother's arm with unwonted affection as she turned to leave the room.

IV

It was pathetic, she thought, that a mother and daughter should be so far apart. It didn't matter so much for her, she had resources within herself. But her mother, for all her sharp tongue and bad manners, created a certain sympathy. She had such a barren soul. It would be nice if she could make her happy without too great a sacrifice. If Rienzi did propose to her she would accept him. Leon was different. She couldn't have done that if her mother's life had depended on it.

But this was really a good opportunity. She didn't love him, that was true, but she did like him exceedingly. He had education and a turn of mind that pleased her. He was nice to look at and his social and financial position was unusually good for a person who had the other qualities. Then, too, there was his name, which had appealed to her from the start. She was awfully tired of being named Goldwater. An ugly name. Most Jewish names were. But Roslyn deSola was lovely. It fell pleasantly on the ear and it was interesting. She felt certain he would ask her.

He did. Quietly as always, he explained that he never waited for anything. He wanted her, had wanted her from the first. He was used to getting what he wanted. Just as quietly and without evasion she accepted him, her chief emotion a sense of relief that at last she could please her mother and still not outrage herself.

Mrs. Goldwater was ecstatic when she heard the news. She had waited up for Roslyn. She'd had a presentiment, she said.

"Oh, my little baby," she exclaimed shrilly and tearfully, "all grown up and ready to fly away! How happy you've made me."

But she didn't remain entirely happy. It aggravated her, she informed her husband, to see Roslyn take it so calmly.

"It's not natural," she complained, "for an engaged girl to be so quiet about it. She hardly seems interested. She's just doing that to aggravate me. She can't bear to see me happy."

Mr. Goldwater made no reply. He felt that any would be useless. His wife continued:

"I don't know what I ever did that God should punish me this way. Oh, it's terrible to have an unnatural child. Well, I suppose I ought to be glad she's willing to marry a respectable Jewish man at all. I was afraid she'd wind up by marrying that Armstrong. But a little sense I guess she's got yet."

Mr. Goldwater soothed her.

"Certainly," he smiled. "With you for a mother she ought to have some sense. She was only fooling around with Armstrong. She never meant to marry him. She knows as well as you do that Jewish men make the best husbands. Everybody knows that. Why, even Gentile girls try to get Jewish boys for husbands. They know they'll have an easier time that way. And don't worry about her. She never gets excited about anything. She's very happy. DeSola'll take good care of her. He's a fine business man,—I had his rating looked up last week. Just out of curiosity, you know."

The engagement was not announced in the Sunday papers. Roslyn and Rienzi were obdurate on that point, and the older deSolas were with them. Rienzi's parents were exceedingly dignified, and well aware of their superiority as Spanish Jews. They did not, as a matter of fact, look upon their son's engagement as a particularly happy circumstance. They liked Roslyn, who was quiet and behaved in what they considered a sufficiently correct manner, but her parents, particularly the mother, were somewhat distasteful. They offered no objection, however. They were very broadminded.

Mrs. Goldwater regarded the refusal to make a public announcement of the engagement as another carefully aimed blow at her. Nevertheless she was compelled to content herself with telling her hosts of friends and acquaintances about it over the telephone. That had its advantages, of course. She could get the full force of their surprise as it struck them. They certainly seemed surprised, and not too happy. The ones with daughters, unmarried but marriageable, sounded sufficiently wistful to put her in an expansive humor.

The wedding, which occurred six weeks later, was quiet, too. The deSolas did not go in for ostentation, Rienzi told his future mother-in-law, with a devastating touch of hauteur, when she held out for a large, expensive wedding with a reception afterward.

"You'd positively think," Mrs. Goldwater said to Roslyn, "that you were ashamed of getting married, both of you. You act so peculiar. *Vulgar!*" She flung the word out. "Everything's vulgar with you. Vulgar and sentimental. You'd think it was a crime to be sentimental. I can't bear this modern business. When I was young, people weren't ashamed of getting married. And girls did what their mothers wanted them to do."

Nevertheless the wedding remained strictly a family affair. Mr. and Mrs. Goldwater and the latter's only sister, Rienzi's parents, his brother and two

married sisters, made up the wedding party. The ceremony was at the home of Dr. Neumann, who had confirmed Roslyn. This was a concession on the part of the deSolas, who would have preferred their own rabbi.

V

THEY went to Cuba on their honeymoon. It was nice going there; Rienzi's fluent Spanish made him exceedingly popular and sought after, both on the boat and on the island. He had been there before, and knew a great many people in Havana.

It was during the second week of their stay that Roslyn began to notice a faint change in her husband. Not that he was any less ardent during their hours alone, but simply that the hours alone were fewer. She couldn't help noticing that he wasn't with her quite so much as one might expect a honeymooning bridegroom to be. Partly it was her own doing. She did not want to venture out in the heat, and Rienzi loved the races. He seemed so greatly disappointed the first time she said she didn't care to go that she told him to go without her. He went, and the next afternoon he went again. The second time he didn't even ask her to go. It became a fairly regular occurrence.

Roslyn didn't mind. She rather liked being alone with her thoughts. There was so much she wanted to get straight in her mind about the whole thing. Was her mother right, she wondered, about learning to love a man after you married him? So far she could not discover the slightest change in her feeling toward Rienzi. She enjoyed being with him, liked his mind, his manner and his appearance. The intimacy of marriage she found not distasteful, but neither did she find it particularly thrilling. It didn't matter, really.

Would that change? It seemed doubtful. Roslyn didn't care, either, she decided. It was best this way, simple, quiet, calm. Different, of course,

if you were crazy about a man. If she had kept on seeing Terry, for instance. Terry had had something for her that Rienzi would never have. Developed, it might have made a great difference in her whole life. Well, no use thinking about that. It was all over. She wondered where Terry was, and what he was doing. He had sent her a Ruskinware bowl when she was married, with nothing in it but his card. No message at all. It was lucky she hadn't fallen in love with Terry. That would have made things so complicated. This way everybody was satisfied.

Up in New York Mrs. Goldwater was fretting. She couldn't understand why Roslyn wasn't more communicative. She was gone nearly three weeks now and hadn't written a single letter. Just a couple of picture post-cards. There were so many things Mrs. Goldwater wanted to know. She'd been a little worried before they started on the trip, and had tried to tell Roslyn a few things she ought to know, but Roslyn had been very unreceptive.

"She wouldn't let me tell her a thing," Mrs. Goldwater told Ike. "Every time I started to say anything she changed the subject. A stranger to her own mother. It's terrible, I tell you. I suppose I should have said something to her sooner, but you know how hard it is to speak to a girl before she's married."

"Oh, well," replied her husband, "I don't think you need to worry. Rienzi is a man of the world; he'll take care of everything."

"Just the same I wish she was back here where I could have my eye on her. I wonder what she's doing now."

At the time her mother was wondering what she was doing, Roslyn was deciding to surprise her husband by going to the racing park to meet him. It had occurred to her that perhaps he was a little hurt by her calm acceptance of his going off alone every afternoon. His manner the past few days had been a trifle remote, as it had been early in their acquaintance. She put on a dress of orchid organdie and a leghorn hat

covered with lilacs. Most of the women who attended the races wore autumn clothes with fur at the throat, but Roslyn couldn't bear the heat, and preferred to be unfashionable. She drove to the park and walked around the pathway, looking for Rienzi. She knew he would be near the rail. After a time she found him. He was standing with his back to her, not watching the horses at all, but talking in an animated way to a woman, evidently Spanish or Cuban. The woman had the opulent beauty of her race, and was heavily made up in the prevailing Paris manner—yellow masque of powder, vermilion lips and deep smudges of black encircling the eyes.

Amazed at the sight, Roslyn stopped close enough to hear that they were talking in Spanish, but not so close that Rienzi was likely to turn around and see her. In a moment her first shock wore off. After all, why shouldn't he talk to anyone he knew? This woman was probably one of his Havana friends. It was silly to jump at conclusions. Still, it might be better if she returned to the hotel without letting him know she had seen him. He might be embarrassed. She was just leaving when Rienzi turned and saw her. He flushed darkly, motioned the Spanish woman to walk on, and strode over to where his wife was standing.

"What do you mean," he said in a voice that trembled with fury and his effort to keep it controlled, "by spying on me? Following me around like a detective! I won't have it."

"Rienzi," she answered quietly, "don't be absurd. I wasn't following you or spying. I just came down to meet you. I thought you'd be pleased. I'm sorry that you aren't. I'll go back and wait for you. I was going anyway when I saw you were engaged."

Rienzi did not answer, but turned, his cheeks still a dark red, and walked in the opposite direction. Roslyn, angry but controlled, returned to her cab and drove back to the hotel. She felt singularly baffled and helpless. Real anger was an emotion that came

to her so infrequently that she never knew how to act under its stress. It always made her feel futile.

She dressed for dinner, but at eight o'clock Rienzi had not returned. She ordered something sent upstairs, wishing to avoid comment. When it came she found herself unable to eat. She tried to read but couldn't concentrate on the book. It was strange, she thought, that her predominating sensation should be one of irritation rather than one of sorrow. His bluster had pointed to the probability that he had been guilty of some indiscretion, at least. Otherwise why should he mind her seeing him, or think she was spying? How lucky for her she wasn't desperately in love with him! She'd be awfully unhappy now if she were, instead of being just contemptuous and annoyed. A little amused, too.

It was almost like one of those melodramas. "Thorns and Orange Blossoms," or "Deserted at the Altar." This wasn't far from it. She could add one to the series, — "Deserted on Her Honeymoon." Great for the movies, except that people would say it was exaggerated. Most men waited until the honeymoon was over. That made her think of a slushy ballad she had heard sung in a vaudeville theatre a few days before her wedding. "When the honeymoon was over," the chorus ran, "they had drifted far apart." How she had giggled over that song. She was giggling now. A little sound of laughter escaped her lips, and died. How could she be so casual about it? It was really a serious matter. Married four weeks, and her husband already interested, by his own involuntary testimony, in other women. Somehow, though, she couldn't seem to take it seriously. Probably Rienzi had dropped some money on a horse and was out of sorts. Then, ashamed of losing his temper, he had put off coming home to her. Maybe this was one of the evidences, so frequently mentioned by her mother, of the childishness of men?

"That's one thing you must bear in mind," Mrs. Goldwater had said. "I

always say men ain't anything but big, overgrown boys. And to get along with them you have to treat them like babies. Humor them, cater to them, and you can wind them around your little finger."

She would try that. She hated quarrels and scenes. There had been so many in her life. For all her mother's lecturings on how to handle men, she had herself used the bludgeon method, and had eventually beaten her husband into submission. And Roslyn had come to flee a quarrel as she would the plague. She didn't want to quarrel with Rienzi, but he probably expected storms and tears upon his return.

She undressed slowly, and went to bed, reading determinedly until midnight, and trying not to listen feverishly every time a footstep passed in the hall, or the elevator stopped at her floor. At twelve o'clock, when Rienzi had not yet returned, she put out the lights, and tried to go to sleep. She wondered what he was doing. Was he still with that woman? Maybe,—the thought suddenly clutched at her,—maybe he wouldn't come back at all that night. Even as she thought it, his key turned in the door. She shut her eyes and pretended to be asleep. It would be better not to talk about it until morning. By then the feeling on both sides would be a little blunted. He came over to her bed and stood there for several minutes? It seemed a long time to Roslyn, whose heart was pounding so loudly that she thought he must hear it. He made no attempt to awaken her, but simply stood there, looking down. After a while he bent and kissed her on the mouth, gently. She could smell whiskey on his breath. She shuddered a little, from physical revulsion. She hated the smell of whiskey.

Then quietly, so as not to disturb her, he undressed. Once he touched her hand across the little telephone table that stood between the two beds. But she did not stir.

In the morning Roslyn was awake first, and found herself quite hungry. She dressed, and ordered breakfast for

both. By the time it arrived Rienzi was awake. He was entirely himself, calm, repressed, assured. He came right to the point.

"My dear," he said without embarrassment, "I'm sorry about yesterday. You see, that wasn't the sort of girl I'd care to have you know, and I was surprised to see you there. And I suppose you might as well know now as later that I have a frightful temper. And I can't bear being questioned."

"Never mind it," she said. "Let's just forget about it. Here's some breakfast."

She didn't remind him, as she wanted to, that she hadn't questioned him at all. No use starting an argument. All the same, she didn't care to remain in Cuba any longer. She spoke tentatively about going home, and found to her surprise that Rienzi was ready to leave. They decided to go North on the next boat out, which sailed the following day.

She spent the morning packing, and was too tired in the afternoon to go with Rienzi to the races, as she had intended. He went alone, but was back early, in an especially good humor. He'd won seven hundred dollars and had bought her a shawl, blue, with huge roses embroidered in white. It was marvelously becoming.

"Oh," she gasped, draping it around her, "it's lovely."

"Not as lovely as you are," Rienzi told her. "You are the loveliest thing in the world."

Roslyn blushed. The admiration embarrassed her, as though a stranger had given voice to it.

VI

ROSLYN and Rienzi stayed at the Ansonia when they got back to New York. They would remain there until Roslyn could find a place to live. What they wanted was a furnished apartment, as Rienzi would have to go to Spain the following year and it seemed foolish to buy furniture when they

didn't know how long they'd be away from home.

"It would probably go out of style," said Mrs. Goldwater to her bridge game a few days later. "And then they'd have to put it in storage for God knows how long, and you know what that does to furniture. Look out there, Mrs. Engel, you're trumping my ace. And as long as Rienzi can afford a furnished apartment—although it does cost an awful lot extra to live that way—they might as well do it. I always tell Roslyn never to refuse anything. If you don't take it they only spend it on themselves. Men never appreciate sacrifices."

After a few days' search Roslyn found just the apartment she wanted. It was on Riverside Drive, near 88th Street, and had a marvelous view of the Hudson. Mrs. Goldwater thought West End Avenue would be a little more refined than the Drive, but Roslyn wanted the river.

Mrs. Goldwater had tried to question Roslyn about her honeymoon, but to no avail. The girl steadfastly refused to offer any confidences, and every time her mother broached the subject she veered sharply away from it. The older woman was hurt. What was the use of having a daughter, she asked her husband, if she shut you out of her heart that way? Before Roslyn was married she had understood a little of the girl's reticence. After all, a girl is bashful about certain things. But for a married woman to ignore a mother's interest in important matters seemed unnatural.

She couldn't even tell whether Roslyn was happy. Although God knows there was no reason on earth why she shouldn't be. Any sensible girl would appreciate such a husband. Sometimes she thought Roslyn was thinking of that fellow Armstrong. Not that she ever said anything, but she looked funny. It worried Mrs. Goldwater a good deal. Once she asked Roslyn about it.

"No," said Roslyn, "I'm not thinking of him. Why should I be?"

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Then she did think of him, and smiled grimly to herself. Her mother had been so afraid she would marry him. Well, he couldn't have acted any more queerly than Rienzi. It was funny, she thought, how many people lived according to axioms. "Jewish men make the best husbands." Her mother and father really believed that. Well, she'd try to keep them from finding out that axioms are not infallible.

A day or two before Roslyn moved into the Buenavista Arms she met Dorothy Lederer in the hall. Dorothy had been in Roslyn's class in Sunday-school, and although they had never been intimate Roslyn was rather glad that Dot lived in the house.

"You must come up some night with your husband," she said. "Make it soon, will you? How do you like being married? Were you disappointed? Bea Reinheimer was up the other afternoon,—she's just back from her honeymoon, too,—and she told us all about it. She was scared to death. Well," as the elevator reached the ground floor, "don't forget to call me as soon as you move in—I'm dying to meet your husband."

The night they moved in Rienzi came home laden with gifts—a five-pound box of Viennese chocolates, the kind she loved; a huge jar of bath crystals, and a magnificent cluster of roses. He was so sorry, he said, he'd have to go out soon after dinner. Some men had arrived unexpectedly in New York, and were remaining only a day or so, and he had to see them. He wouldn't be out late.

Roslyn was disappointed. She had counted rather heavily on the idea of being alone in their own home for the first time. She had thought it might bring her some of that spirit she had heard so much about and read so much about, but had not yet felt. She said she was sorry, and asked him not to be any later than he could help.

"Business is business, my dear," Rienzi answered her with a flash of the temper he had exhibited and warned her against in Havana. "I can't give

up everything just because I'm married. I'll come home as soon as I can."

Left alone after his departure, she picked up a new book and began to read. Always, during her entire life, she had been able to obliterate any unpleasantness by means of a book. It was still potent. She forgot Rienzi and her troubled spirit and lost herself in the novel. It was after one o'clock when she finished the book. Her eyes hurt and her back was tired from the strain of sitting in one position. Roslyn read with complete absorption.

She prepared for bed, wondering what time her husband would come in, trying, as in Havana, to fall asleep. She could not, however, and was still wide awake when he got back. This time he switched on the lights, scarcely noticing that she was in bed.

"Hello," she said lightly, "you're late, villain. What kept you so long?"

He did not answer, but jerked off his collar with an impatient hand. He spent the next half hour moving noisily around the bedroom and bath. Then without speaking, he switched off the lights and got into bed. He had been drinking. The whiskey fumes were close to her mouth. She turned her face away. She wanted to cry, but couldn't. She had never been able to cry without an audience and she couldn't let him see. Anyway he was falling asleep. He must have drunk quite a lot, she thought.

She didn't sleep much that night. She lay, wide-eyed and still, wondering just what would happen to her. Would he continue to be this way, or would he revert to his earlier attitude? Since her marriage she had not seen much of the Rienzi who talked so entertainingly of the things she liked to hear about. His quiet calm, which she had appreciated so, had turned somehow into sullenness, and was omnipresent except for the times when he was lost in his emotions. He was not especially attractive either way. She marveled at her attitude of detachment from the situation. She couldn't

love him, or she would be more wounded at those things. If she loved him she would be unhappy, and she wasn't. She was merely uncomfortable. She wished she were not married to him, yet she didn't hate him. Maybe she could build up some sort of life. She wanted to, for her mother's sake. It would be such a blow to her if things went to smash.

Decidedly, they were not improving, she reflected a few evenings later, when she again found herself alone. Rienzi had telephoned before dinner, saying that again a business engagement would detain him. She called Dot Lederer on the phone, inviting her for dinner.

"Come up, won't you?" she asked. "Everything's ready, and Rienzi just phoned he had to stay downtown with some men."

Dot came. She'd hate to have that happen to her, she said.

"I'd raise the devil if I were you," she bantered. "Married three months and staying out for dinner already. Maybe he's with a girl."

Roslyn smiled. "Maybe he is," she repeated.

"Gee," said Dorothy, "you certainly don't make a noise like a loving bride." After dinner they went to the theatre, driving downtown in the Marmon. Rienzi had bought after their return from Cuba. He was not yet home when they returned. This time Roslyn fell asleep before he got in, and nothing was said about it in the morning.

His absences from home, for dinner or for the entire evening, continued with a certain regularity. They occurred about once a week. He always telephoned or sent a message from the office. Roslyn had grown quite accustomed to it, and mentioned it neither to him nor to anyone else. She felt sure that the Lederers noticed it, though; a couple of times she had met Mr. and Mrs. Lederer or the boys in the elevator when she had come in late at night, alone. They made no comment to her, but she knew they thought it strange.

Mrs. Goldwater, she made sure, sus-

pected nothing. How lucky she had never talked much to her mother. Her present reticence was irritating, but not exactly surprising to Mrs. Goldwater. She had always been as close-mouthed as a clam. A terrible way to be. Just like her father. You could never get a word out of either of them if you died in the attempt. But Roslyn seemed to be getting along all right with Rienzi. They were both quiet and reserved,—so old for their years,—they didn't act a bit like a young married couple. And Mrs. Goldwater never saw the senior deSolas at all. You'd think they were total strangers the way they acted. So distant. Well, anyway, they ought to get along all right with Roslyn. She was much more like them than she was like her own mother.

They did get along all right with Roslyn, who with Rienzi dined at their home every Tuesday evening. They were friendly, but not intimate, which was quite satisfactory. They didn't act as though they owned their children, she found, and she appreciated them for it. They adored Rienzi. Well, he could be utterly charming. Sometimes she got flashes of that compelling quality which had first captured her imagination. People called him fascinating. He did have something that held her interest, even though she didn't love him. Occasionally they would have a very good time together, going out to dance, or talking about a book, or going to a play.

No matter what they talked about, the subject of his absences never came up. Roslyn was determined to ignore them. She knew that a mention of them would be certain to arouse his temper. And so long as he didn't do anything spectacularly bad she didn't much care. Outward peace was preserved and things were pleasanter that way.

Dorothy Lederer had reminded her a number of times of the promised visit.

"You know," she said, meeting Roslyn in the elevator one morning, "you've never brought Rienzi down to

meet the family. How about tomorrow night?"

Roslyn said she would try to make it, and that night when Rienzi came home she consulted him. He was in a particularly good humor, and said it would be all right. Roslyn phoned downstairs and confirmed the engagement.

At five o'clock the next afternoon, Rienzi's stenographer called Roslyn on the phone. Mr. deSola had caught the four o'clock train to Philadelphia, she said, and had asked her to tell Mrs. deSola that he would not be home for dinner, but would come back on the seven o'clock train and meet her at the Lederers as soon after nine as possible.

Roslyn's heart sank at the thought of explaining things to the Lederers, who were already aware of something peculiar about her marriage. But at least she had something definite to say. He might, if he had been in the humor, have gone off without any explanation at all.

She ate a scrappy dinner. There was no fun eating alone. She fought desperately to overcome a nervous feeling before going downstairs. She mustn't let them see that she was upset. They talked so. She tried to read, but couldn't. Her former faculty for losing herself in a book was gone. Her attention strayed. Conscious of a fierce resentment, at this more than at anything else, she dressed. A few minutes before going downstairs she took a bromide to settle her nerves, but it had no effect.

The Lederers accepted her explanation of Rienzi's absence with apparent belief, but she read scepticism in their eyes. A few minutes before eight the phone rang.

"For you, Ros," called Dorothy, who had answered it, "it's Rienzi."

Roslyn walked to the telephone, which was standing on a little table in the hall just outside the room they occupied.

"He's still in Philadelphia," she said, her face flushed, as she re-entered the room. "He missed the seven o'clock train, but he's at the station now, wait-

ing for the eight o'clock. He'll dash right up here when he gets in."

They decided on a bridge game while waiting for Rienzi. That at least eliminated the necessity for conversation. Twenty minutes later the house phone rang. Again it was for Roslyn. She walked out into the hall again, a little further away from the room, to where the box telephone was fastened to the wall. They couldn't see her, for which she was grateful, for her body was trembling violently.

A gasp of surprise, a few broken, incoherent words, a final anguished "Yes, I'll be right up," was all. She stood in the doorway, controlling her voice by a terrific effort.

"I'm sorry," she said, "but I'll have to go upstairs." No explanation. No comment.

"Do you want anyone to go up with you?" Mrs. Lederer broke the silence. "Is it burglars?"

"Oh, no," hastily from Roslyn. "It's all right." And she sped out of the door, not waiting for the elevator to carry her upstairs.

In the apartment she found her husband, sprawled across a couch in the foyer. His face was green and he was making funny noises.

"Wajja take so long for?" he articulated with difficulty, as she came in the door. "Canja see I'm s-s-sick? Help me to bed." Without answering, she pulled him to his feet and supported his weight as far as the bedroom. Gritting her teeth, she undressed him and got him into bed. She shut the door carefully after him, and sat down in the foyer, her first bewilderment clearing away. He was drunk. And he had not been in Philadelphia when he telephoned. In her mind there had been some lingering belief that perhaps he had really been out on business all the times he said he was. But this was fairly conclusive proof that he hadn't been. She thought bitterly of her mother's axiom. "Jewish men make the best husbands." What was it she had said would happen if Roslyn married a Gentile? He would drink,

and he would run around with other women. She shrugged. Well, why had she accepted the axiom? Chiefly, she confessed to herself, because she hated scenes. She had married Rienzi largely as a result of her wish to prevent scenes. And she had kept quiet about his treatment because she wanted to avoid scenes.

Now he had made a scene, even though he hadn't appeared in the flesh. Before the Lederers, too. She didn't love him, and that had enabled her to tolerate his neglect. But also because she didn't love him she was unable to tolerate being humiliated before others. Something would have to be done. Much as she hated to confess to her parents that the marriage was a failure, she would have to.

In the morning, after a sleepless night and a silent breakfast, she went to her mother's house. It was hard to begin, because she knew how much her mother would be hurt. And Mrs. Goldwater, despite the gossip which, as Roslyn had surmised, was being disseminated by the Lederers, had no intimation that anything was wrong.

VII

"MOTHER," Roslyn said, after Mrs. Goldwater had expressed voluble surprise at her early visit, "I have something to tell you." Mrs. Goldwater beamed.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "you're not . . .?" Roslyn could not suppress a smile.

"No," she said bluntly, "I'm not, thank God. That would only make matters worse. Mother, I hate to have to tell you this, but I think I'd better before someone else does. I want to come home. Rienzi's been acting very badly. I don't love him and he doesn't love me. I want to leave him."

For the first time in her life that Roslyn could remember her mother had nothing to say. She was stunned. She gasped. Her face grew red, several times she started to speak, but each time she stopped, overcome.

"You never suspected it, did you?" Roslyn asked.

Mrs. Goldwater had recovered her voice.

"Certainly not. Why, I never heard of such a thing. Married five months and wanting to leave your husband! I suppose you had some little quarrel about nothing. What's the trouble, anyway? I thought you were a sensible girl, Roslyn. You can't leave your husband. What would people say?"

"Not much more than they're saying already," Roslyn replied.

She hadn't expected much co-operation from her mother, but she had hoped for some attempt at understanding.

"Now I want you to do something, if you can. Listen to me, and don't jump at conclusions. Rienzi doesn't love me. He wanted me, and the only way he could get me was by marriage. Well, that's over, and he's not interested any more. He began to lose interest in me while we were still in Cuba, but I made up my mind not to do anything until he forced me too. Now he has."

She told her mother the whole story, leading up to the episode of the previous night.

"So now, you see, everybody'll know about it," she said, "and I have no more reason for remaining with him. I don't care for him, mother, really, and I'd rather not go on with it. I'm still young enough for it not to make any difference."

But Mrs. Goldwater couldn't see it that way. It would make all the difference in the world, she said. Roslyn would be disgraced. They would all be disgraced. She started to cry. Her face worked convulsively, her hands clawed the air, her thin, brownish hair became unloosened. Why was she being punished this way? she asked God. What had she done to deserve such a fate? Her sobs grew louder and more painful. Roslyn quailed. She had always had a horror of her mother's crying spells. At the same time she had always had a wild desire to laugh when her mother cried, because she looked so

grotesquely funny. Now she did, hysterically.

"Oh, mother," she said, "stop that, for heaven's sake! You can't imagine how ugly it makes you look. If you stop I'll go back and make another stab at it."

It was magic. The tears ceased, the face straightened out miraculously to its original shape.

"That's a good girl," she said, still struggling with her sobs. "Try to patch it up. Lots of men are that way in the beginning, but they get over it if you handle them right. You'll be glad later on if you take my advice. Every cloud has a silver lining."

Roslyn left, a feeling of defeat pervading her mind. Proverbs. Axioms. Theories. Her mother lived by them. No matter if facts proved the theories wrong. The theories held anyway. Oh, well, what difference did it make? Maybe children were put into the world for the purpose of making parents happy at their own expense. Maybe her mother was subconsciously making her pay for the fact that *she* had been enslaved by *her* mother. If she ever had children, which of course she wouldn't, she wouldn't make them pay for her mistakes.

Rienzi came home for dinner that night. No reference was made to the night before. He was polite but frigid. After dinner he went out, saying nothing about it. He did not return that night. Roslyn wondered why she had been such a fool as to be persuaded by her mother. That was her greatest handicap, that inability to face scenes when it was necessary. She always collapsed in the middle of anything that threatened to be a scene. Peace at any price. Temporary peace, even at the cost of permanent peace.

That day was the beginning of a new régime. The Philadelphia affair seemed to have been the last of Rienzi's attempts to cover his escapades. No more pretense. No more excuses. He just went out and stayed out. Sometimes he didn't come home for several days. And when he did he was usually drunk.

Insolent feminine voices called on the telephone and left messages for him.

The affair was the chief topic of conversation among the people who knew Roslyn. Rienzi's every party was witnessed by some interested observer who would detail it to several more interested listeners. If he had been enamored of all the chorus beauties he was credited with, he would have needed the Century Theatre for his amours.

It was Leon Jacoby who brought Roslyn the first authentic information. He felt responsible for the whole thing, he told Roslyn tragically, as he had introduced them. And now he felt it his duty to tell her that deSola was maintaining an establishment for a particularly notorious member of an especially riotous chorus. He couldn't imagine why she didn't get a divorce.

Roslyn couldn't either, she said, excepting that she hadn't yet brought herself around to the point of having another scene with her mother. But even that lady was soon convinced that Roslyn would be better off back home. She was virulent in her attitude toward Rienzi and his entire family.

"Loafer!" she wailed. "Bum! And such a family. To put on airs with a son like that, who takes an innocent young girl and ruins her entire life. They should be here, instead of gallivanting around Europe. Believe me, if they were, I'd tell them what I thought of them."

Her life wasn't ruined, Roslyn insisted. She would get a divorce at the earliest possible moment—it ought to be easy—and start all over again. She could teach or something. She hadn't enjoyed the experience, but it hadn't done her any real harm. It wasn't as though she had been really in love with him.

"Hasn't done you any real harm!" her mother exploded. "Are you crazy? What decent Jewish man would care to marry you after you've been divorced? And not even married a year. No matter how innocent you are, there'll always be someone to say there must be two sides to the story."

VIII

As Roslyn had predicted, the divorce was easy. There was a superabundance of evidence. It was done in the quietest way possible, and with great speed, considering the disinclination of New York judges to grant divorces to women. Rienzi had not troubled to appear in his own behalf. Exactly ten months and two days after Roslyn Goldwater had become Mrs. Rienzi deSola she once more became Roslyn Goldwater. She was legally entitled to the use of her husband's name, but she waived the right.

"A poor thing, but mine own," she had murmured. The judge, in spite of himself, had smiled. She had wanted to waive alimony, too, but her mother wouldn't let her.

"It's not the money," she had insisted. "It's the principle of the thing. Why should you give him the satisfaction? He'll only spend it on that *Stück*."

The alimony was awarded, but collected for only a few weeks. Within a month after the divorce Rienzi sailed for Spain, and alimony cannot be collected in foreign countries.

After her divorce Roslyn went to Atlantic City for a couple of weeks. She hadn't wanted to go, particularly, but her mother seemed to feel that it was necessary, like going on a sea voyage after an illness. It was April, and there was no use trying to get a teaching job now, so soon after school closed. Besides, Roslyn didn't want to teach. She wasn't equipped for anything else, though. Some of the girls she had known in college were doing settlement work, but she didn't want to uplift anyone, and besides, she was a divorcée. She'd like to find a job that would interest her, even if it didn't pay much. She didn't need the money. Who did she know that might help her find one?

Terry Armstrong, of course. He always knew about everything. Her thoughts had been unconsciously drifting in his direction for several weeks. She knew he was still on the same paper, because she had recently seen his

name over a story. She wondered what he would say if she called him up. Would he be surprised? No, nothing ever surprised Terry. Would he be glad? She could tell from the sound of his voice. He never took the trouble of disguising his feelings. Just then a new thought struck her. Maybe he was married. That wouldn't be so good. She'd have to find out at once.

She went to the telephone and called the Beekman number. Funny, it came to her lips just as though she had been calling it all along. As always, she was cut off several times before she succeeded in getting the city room. As always, an especially stupid copy boy answered the phone and took ten minutes to discover that it was Mr. Armstrong she wanted, and not Mr. MacArthur. As always, he took ten minutes more to discover that Mr. Armstrong was out on a story and would not be back until four o'clock.

Disappointed, she hung up. At five she tried again. Terry was there and, after a long wait, during which she could hear the peculiar hum that comes over the telephone from a newspaper office, he came to the wire.

She had been right. He was not surprised. He had known of her divorce, but hadn't wanted to intrude. He was undisguisedly glad she had called him and asked her to have tea with him the next afternoon. He had an assignment he could fake. All right. Four, at the Biltmore.

For the first time in months Roslyn was light of heart. She was going to see her old friend. She hadn't asked, but she could tell that he wasn't married. Suddenly, her whole experience with Rienzi, which had never been very real to her at any time, seemed wiped out. It was just like the time she had been slapped by her mother before a great many people. It hadn't hurt, but she'd been terribly humiliated. Now she could look back at it without flinching. It didn't matter. And her marriage had been like that. It had been humiliating, but now it didn't matter.

She spent two hours with Terry the

next afternoon. He looked just the same, and told her she hadn't changed either.

"It doesn't seem to have made any mark on you at all," he said. "You didn't love him, did you?" She said no, and asked him whether he could help her find a job. It wouldn't need to pay anything to speak of, she explained, she just wanted something that would occupy her time and her mind, if possible.

Terry thought there might be an opening in the Fresh Air Fund of his paper. "You wouldn't be a reporter, you know," he grinned, "and you'd only get about twenty beans a week. You'd have to write blurbs every day about the kiddies and the sunshine and all that sort of bunk. But you'd get on the paper, and then if you made good there, which would be a pipe, you might get on the city staff later. Believe me, dumber girls than you have been able to get away with it."

Roslyn was ecstatic. It sounded wonderful. To do anything at all on a metropolitan daily was marvelous. She had no illusions about herself as a writer, she assured Terry, but she thought she might be able to handle that sort of work.

In a few days he telephoned and asked her to come down and meet the Fresh Air Editor, a thin, anæmic person who looked as though he could use a little fresh air himself. He hired her on Terry's recommendation, and she arranged to begin work the next day.

The family was astonished at the news. Her father took it calmly, but Mrs. Goldwater didn't like the idea of her working on a paper. It was so bohemian.

"Is it the same paper that Armstrong works on?" she asked. Roslyn said it was. Her mother heaved a great sigh, and said nothing. Her feelings were too deep for words.

Roslyn liked the job very much. Inside of a few weeks she was quite an expert on the subject of fresh air. She and Terry ate lunch together whenever he was around the office at noon, and

sometimes they stayed downtown for dinner. There was something very attractive to Roslyn about Park Row on spring evenings, and she especially loved walking part of the way across Brooklyn Bridge and looking across the bay toward the half lighted buildings. She was now part of all that, and so was Terry. They shared an occupation now, as well as a great many thoughts.

IX

WHILE they were walking across Brooklyn Bridge in the dusk Mr. and Mrs. Goldwater were eating dinner at home. The meal finished, Mr. Goldwater pushed his chair back from the table, breathed a long, audible sigh and shook out his napkin before his face.

"Pardon me," he said to his wife, drawing his quill toothpick from his lower waistcoat pocket, "I never went back to the dentist to have that filling fixed." His eyes wandered toward the horizon as he gave himself up to the task of removing the remains of his dinner from the offending tooth. The ceremony completed, he folded up his napkin, replaced the toothpick, and addressed his wife.

"You're drumming again, Millie," he said pleasantly. "What's the trouble?"

Mrs. Goldwater looked at him reproachfully as she stopped rapping her knuckles on the table.

"It's no laughing matter, I assure you," she said. "It's very serious. It's about Roslyn. You'd think that girl

would have had enough disgrace for one lifetime, without starting in on something new." Mr. Goldwater's face blanched.

"What is it now?" he asked anxiously. "Where is she, anyhow?"

"Where is she?" repeated Mrs. Goldwater shrilly. "She's out bumming with that Terry Armstrong. I knew she shouldn't go to work down on that paper, where she'd see him every day. And he was here very late the other night when we were to Jacoby's. Lizzie saw them. They were sitting very close together, with the lights out, Lizzie said. Wouldn't you think after one experience like she's had she'd have sense enough to be careful? But no. Starting to run around with a Goy. That's all we need yet, for her to marry a Gentile! A boy like Leon Jacoby wasn't good enough for her when she could have had him. Even now she could get him if she wanted to. But she has to hang around with a forty-dollar-a-week reporter who lives in the Greenwich Village. Who ain't even Jewish. Ike, you'll have to speak to her. Right away. Tonight."

She stopped to catch her breath, and her husband took advantage of the pause.

"Yes," he said, "we've had trouble enough with that girl. It isn't a good idea for her to run around with a Gentile feller. It's all right as long as they're just friends, but the first thing you now they'll get stuck on each other, and then where would we be? You're right, Millie, I'll speak to her tonight."



WHEN a man commits suicide, it is the result of a love affair. When a woman commits suicide it is the result of the result of a love affair.



A MAN doesn't look for a happy ending to a love affair, merely one without hysterics.



The Higher Learning in America

XIV

Atlanta University

By Walter White

I

GEORGIA is the habitat of the lynching bee, the Sahara of Methodism in its most virulent form, a premier producer of cotton and illiteracy. As yet, no great outcry has been made down there against Darwinism and evolution, but that is probably because most Georgians have never heard of these pernicious doctrines. But let some damned Yankee mention the barbarity, the dearth of civilization in that vast realm, and the heavens are made to ring with denunciations of the scoundrel who doesn't know the glories of the ex-Confederate *Kultur*. He is lucky indeed if he isn't tarred and feathered. Blatant, ignorant and stupid beyond belief are the white masters of the Empire State of the South, impervious to ideas, and adamant in their opposition to every civilizing influence. The idiocies of the Ku Klux Klan are excellent gauges of the mentality of the inhabitants of the state. The antics of the late Tom Watson in the United States Senate amazed and amused the slightly more civilized Senators from the North. But those same buffooneries—ranting, idiotic denunciations of his enemies and invitations to mortal combat by one obviously suffering from senile decay—elevated Tom in his native commonwealth to the estate and dignity of a demi-god.

Why do I talk thus about a state in preparing to speak of a college in that state? The answer is easy. If one writes of Harvard or Oxford or the Sorbonne, one does not have to drag

a dissertation on the people who inhabit Massachusetts or England or France. The facts are taken for granted. But one must mention them in speaking of the institutions of the late Confederacy, for the crass ignorance and backwardness of those states colors everything that goes on in them. This is particularly true when that something is an enterprise for propagating the higher learning among Negroes.

The story of Atlanta University is a curious blending of the heroic and the absurd. Most Americans, I daresay, have never heard of this little institution, and would dismiss it lightly as a jerk-water college of no importance if they did. Yet there are few institutions in America and none in the South that have had a more potent influence on the trend of Negro thought in America and in the creation of race-consciousness among eleven million Americans.

Shortly after the close of the Civil War there went to Atlanta from New England a brave and intelligent man, Edmund Asa Ware, scion of a splendid old Puritan family, to found a school for the education and training of the newly emancipated Negro youth. His schemes were large. When asked why he dared call a tiny school yet in embryo by the gaudy title of university, he replied simply that some day it *would* be a university and he wanted to save later generations the trouble of having to change the name. For years he labored, aided by his wife and a few other rare souls, until he had laid the foundations of an institution which has done more

than any other agency to fill the masses of American Negro souls with the fire of revolt.

It was no easy task that Edmund Asa Ware faced. On the one hand he had the ignorance of the unlettered slaves to deal with; on the other the violent and vicious opposition of the whites. Stern, unyielding, his soul filled with the conviction that he was right and must eventually win, he refused to budge an inch, no matter what storms assailed him. Perhaps the clearest index to the character of the men of that era is to be found in the attitude taken by Dr. Bumstead, who succeeded President Ware, when in the late '90's an agitation was started in the Georgia Legislature to cut off an annual appropriation to the school of \$20,000 because the founders did not specifically bar all but Negroes from the institution. Dr. Bumstead was called before a committee of the Legislature and asked what would be his attitude if a white student applied for admission. He might have evaded the question by saying that in Georgia it was highly unlikely a white girl or boy would apply to a Negro school for admittance, but he refused to dodge. Instead, he answered straight from the shoulder: "We would admit any person, gentlemen, who could qualify." That answer cost Atlanta University \$20,000 a year—and \$20,000 is no mean sum to a school of its size. But Atlanta graduates hold their heads just a bit higher when they think of it.

II

THE city of Atlanta, capital of the Ku Klux Empire, rests on seventeen red clay hills. On one of the higher of these, in the western part of the city, stands Atlanta University. Clanking, dingy, fat little trolley cars run out to it through a narrow gorge of a street. On the left bank of this artificial ravine stands Stone Hall, dignified in its coat of ivy, like an old dandy trying to look smart in frayed linen and shiny clothes. Near it is a large boys' dormitory, flanked on its left by the Carnegie

Library. The library, in turn, is flanked by the newest building on the campus: the training school for girls taking the teachers' course.

Across "the cut" from Stone Hall is the region where masculine foot dare not tread save when armed with a little white permission slip signed, in my day, "M. W. A." It may be explained that those awe-inspiring initials were the dean's. Across the bridge is North Hall, housing the females of the species, and Furber Cottage, a training home in the domestic arts.

Off in the distance are the shops, and the athletic field, and the barns and homes of professors and teachers.

* * *

Fifty-odd years ago Edmund Ware and his associates went down to Atlanta with certain ideas which were more or less true then. One was that it was best and safest to treat all Negro students like children. Hadn't the Negroes just been freed from slavery? Didn't they need to be watched and kept in check like incorrigible ten-year-olds? Weren't all of them child-like and ignorant? Weren't they rustic, crude, and primitive in speech, action and thought? If these things were so, and they were so then, it was obviously best to keep them in firm yet kindly restraint.

Today the children and grandchildren of those first students are given much the same treatment as their parents. Girls and boys, high school and college graduates, country and city pupils, young men and women from the best and worst Negro homes (and here there are wider social differences in the colored race than in the white)—all must submit to one draconian code of discipline, with the same punishments for trivial infractions of the rules by the senior as for wild offendings by the youngest "prep." The city of Atlanta, until a year ago, furnished no high schools for Negroes. Atlanta University, together with the four other colored colleges of Atlanta, has been forced to maintain a high school as well as col-

legiate courses. Thus discipline continues to be meted out to mature college students that no more fits them for life than keeping a baby in a crib teaches it to walk.

Of social life there is but little. Dreary, dolorous affairs known as "socials," under rigid faculty observation, are held at infrequent intervals. Girls and boys who are "going together" do manage by the exercise of prodigious feats of legerdemain to extract some degree of joy out of them, but one must be of more than ordinary ingenuity to accomplish it. A dreary procession of marches is the chief source of official enjoyment; nothing so sinful as even the most decorous of dancing is allowed. That pastime, as natural to the American youth, white or black, as eating, takes on the additional joy of surreptitiousness when the girls have their little dances on the sly. Fully twice as many girls learn to hoof it at Atlanta as would do so if it were not forbidden. And in the same way boys sneak off the campus to indulge in the levantine vice of smoking cigarettes, not because they like smoking so much as because they love liberty more.

Compulsory attendance at church and chapel and Sunday-school, even up to the senior year, makes more rebels against religion than even the Presbyterian concept of hell could ever do. Rules here; rules there; this must be done; that must never be done; Pelion piled upon Ossa until the product, at the end of four years, is either an insufferable nincompoop or a rebellious nonconformist, ready to break out against all the bonds and restrictions of life after college. It is no doubt partly due to this reaction that a large number of the young Negroes leading the current fight for the liberation of their race in America are full of radical ideas. A professor of Freudism might explain it very simply.

III

THE athletic doings at Atlanta give its sons and daughters another weapon against the struggles and defeats of life.

There have been so many disasters in football that it is part of the training of an Atlanta student to dismiss the whole thing with a shrug of his shoulders—and to dwell on the more cerebral joys of winning intercollegiate debates. In baseball the goddess of luck has smiled more benignly at rare intervals, though even here the Atlanta crowd, recruited mainly from the cities and large towns, is wont to speak disparagingly of "the farmers" who have been so unwise as to choose rival colleges. Of late, however, the winning of a number of big football games is probably changing the old defeatist philosophy into one of confidence in the supremacy of mind over matter.

Between some members of the faculty and the students there is deep and real affection. For others of the professorial elect there is respect. But to many of the latter-day crop of teachers there is given neither. The reasons are simply explained. There remain but few of those men and women who, led by a spirit of sacrifice, were willing to leave their homes in the North and go South, and there suffer social ostracism and insult and deprivation, to teach the youth of an oppressed race. Of late many who have gone to Atlanta and schools like it in the South have done so because they had not the intellectual equipment or the training to secure and hold positions nearer home, or because they were drawn by the prospect of spending their winters in a balmy, lazy climate. Thus the standards have declined and the students have suffered. Other schools have met this problem by combing the big colleges for colored youths of talent and promise who, fired by the chance to put into practice their newly acquired learning, are willing to accept the comparatively small salaries such schools can pay.

Even now Atlanta is seeking a president to succeed the son of the founder, whose ill health has forced his resignation. Rumor has it that a superannuated Congregational minister from Connecticut is being sought. So in the choice of trustees. There spring to

mind five, ten, twenty graduates of the school or of other schools—able Negroes who would add real prestige to the institution. Instead, respectable old men are regularly chosen to fill the vacancies.

IV

For many years fraternities—that is, known ones—were barred by a faculty ruling. The human tendency to divide on some ground or other, real or imaginary, took the form of two semi-ritualistic factions that formed a line of cleavage in the student body far more rigid and disastrous than that fraternities would have created. Forbidden? Therefore immeasurably more enticing and unswervingly adhered to. Every student in the school belonged to one or the other.

The principal student publication, the *Scroll*, is student edited and published—unless some unhappy contributor chances to write an article or paragraph which displeases the college fathers. There follows then a more or less warm interview in the office of the president or the dean.

The aforementioned Carnegie Library is often used for other than studious research. In it are the usual reference, reading and map rooms. Once they had a librarian who wore rubber heels. Many a tête-à-tête did she interrupt.

In hallways between classes the youth full of love seeks a word with his girl as they hurry along to Chemistry or Math. Or again, he has an unhurried word or two in the fifteen-minute “sociables” in the chapel after the monthly rhetoricals.

There isn't much allowance for the great Caucasian science of petting, but as in the case of dancing, cigarettes and fraternities, the age-long attraction of forbidden fruit yet wields its power.

* * *

I fear I have given you a rather dismal picture of undergraduate life at Atlanta. The unsympathetic white environment, the lack of training and breadth of vision of most of the teachers, the senseless restrictions that exert an influence diametrically opposite to that intended—all these are handicaps and nuisances. But Atlanta has a spiritual heritage that partly compensates for them. Its students chafe against its bonds and its graduates know something must be done about them. Yet all know the history of the school, of the years not all past (for there is the revival of the Ku Klux Klan), when it was actually dangerous to teach in such a place. Higher education for Negroes—or whites either—is not yet very popular in the South. Industrial schools like Hampton and Tuskegee get thousands of dollars where schools like Atlanta get dimes. Yet its few graduates—not two thousand in number—have furnished much of the leaven that has begun to break up the abysmal ignorance of nine million Negroes in the South. There are few communities where Negroes are where one will not also find an Atlanta man or woman at work. Theirs is the crusading spirit. Trained and molded in the rigid discipline of Atlanta, they are building the mind and body and spirit of a race.



THE common fault is to mistake a woman's answer for her decision.



Imbobo

By Phillips Russell

I

JOHN CARSLAKE had meant to be a great painter. But at an early age he was disconcerted to find himself married. He and his wife, who always signed herself "(Mrs.) Gladys van Patten Carslake" on her favorite stationery of robin's egg blue, had a nice little home, however. And babies, hearing about it, began to crowd in there. Down from heaven, every year or two, floated the little winged souls in search of pasteurized milk served in boiled, graduated bottles; orange juice; rubber sheets; talcum powder; and later, jam, bread and butter with sugar on it; and shoes.

So Carslake laid aside Art for the time being and took up Map Making for an engraving concern. At first he hated to admit his occupation, but gradually he learned to derive a certain humor from it. People, meeting him casually, would ask him what he was doing now, and when he would answer, Doing Maps, they would laugh, supposing of course that he meant he was painting portraits of rich persons; and they would go away deeming Carslake a sardonic kind of fellow but likeable withal.

As map artist it was Carslake's business to take a metal plate and coat it with wax on which to trace delicate lines to represent railroads, rivers, boundaries, etc. From this was made a casting, from which in turn the map was printed. It was exacting and tedious work but it paid a good salary; and Mrs. Carslake did not lack embossed stationery or the children adenoid operations.

But Carslake used to curse his occupation sometimes, not because it was exacting or tedious, because even Art was that, but because it required regularity, punctuality, and other things repulsive to his soul. Carslake had always fancied himself a highly irresponsible, gusty, fitful fellow, given to strange moods and occasionally likely to appal his fellows with outbursts of temperamental fury. But if he was irregular at the map factory the fact showed on the time clock and his pay suffered a subtraction, while he seldom appalled his associates except by asking for a loan of two dollars when they had only 85 cents till pay day.

There was a certain compensation for Carslake, however, in tracing maps. The work often led to the discovery of foreign names and places that partly gratified his longing for travel.

He had always held that an artist should travel mightily, drawing stimulation from strange scenes, colorful costumes, and outlandish smells. He himself had often dreamed of going to Paris and absorbing *petites moinnettes* for a few weeks; thence to Spain to take in Goya and El Greco, with a little dancing on the side; thence to Sicily for the *tarantella* season; thence to Greece for a little temple worship; thence to Constantinople for a few cups of coffee in some little café situated across the street from a prominent harem; thence to India to study Mogul design; thence to Japan to see if it were true that the geishas lived only to please men; and finally to San Francisco, California roses, and interstate bootlegger.

II

CARSLAKE was copying an old map of the Eastern hemisphere one day when his eye alighted upon a speck in the Indian Ocean indicating the island of Imbobo.

Imbobo!

Somehow the name lingered in his mind and kept recurring thereafter.

Imbobo!

He was attracted by the odd situation of the island, its distance from anywhere, and above all by the magic sound of the name.

Imbobo!

As his work, by long practice, became more and more automatic, his mind became free to roam where it willed, and he passed many iridescent hours weaving spells for himself about Imbobo.

He resolved to get there somehow as soon as Millicent, the latest baby, was old enough to go to kindergarten. He would get six months' leave of absence, provide the family with a place in the country, and shove off, even if it had to be aboard a tramp steamer. He pictured himself, after a long voyage beset by monsoons and typhoons, walking up to a deckhand one morning and saying casually:

"What land is that?"

And the deckhand, glancing across the cherry-coloured sea to the headland that showed faintly blue through the canary mist, would answer:

"Imbobo, sir."

And then, to the rattle of the anchor chain through the hawse pipes, a boat would push off from the ship's side, with himself as solitary passenger. He would land on a palm-shaded shore, soon winning the natives over with presents of beads, calico cloth, and his kindly manner. Doubtless they would be impressed by his picture magic and would regard him as a half-god. He might linger a year. Or two years. Hard on his wife of course, but then, she had rich relatives, hadn't she? Let them help her a little. It might relieve

them of the monotony of always helping themselves.

III

MILLICENT soon reached the kindergarten age, but her father did not get started for Imbobo that year. Instead, he passed his vacation of two weeks with his family at a seaside summer resort where everybody came out upon the boardwalk late in the afternoon to show their sunburn. Mrs. Carslake chose the place because she said the sea air would be good for Millicent, who turned out to be a delicate child.

Carslake's room was immediately beneath the roof, which industriously stored the heat all day and shed it generously all night. To lie awake and listen to the splashing surf behind window screens designed to keep out mosquitoes but which seemed to keep out fresh air too, was maddening to Carslake, through whose mind floated vague and quickly repelled thoughts of murdering his family in their sleep and escaping to Imbobo in a stolen boat. He comforted himself to a degree, however, by promising himself that next year he would start for that island or get himself killed in the attempt.

The following winter he began to save up a little money and he had \$38 in a savings bank when his wife was seized by a dangerous ailment for which she had to go to a hospital. She recovered much sooner than expected, but in the course of her convalescence he himself was laid low by a malignant attack of influenza attended by complications which lasted so long he feared his job at the map plant would be gone by the time he returned. These catastrophes left him deeply in debt, and it was with apprehension drying his palate that he went back, before he was really fit, to interview his employers.

The thought of a voyage through purple seas seemed very foolish just now. Imbobo indeed! He dropped the notion through a hole at the back of his mind with a sickly grin at his

own wild fancies. At that moment nothing in the universe seemed so desirable as a safe job. If only he were taken back, he resolved to be very practical in future. He would take his lunches in arm-chair beaneries, make his old overcoat do another year, and avoid people who were always discovering wonderful new synthetic stimulants at \$75 a case.

But his depression swiftly changed to a belief that civilization, despite occasional slips, was on the upgrade when his employers welcomed him back with undisguised heartiness and sympathetic inquiries after his health. Moreover, they called him into conference the very next day and informed him that a reorganization had been decided upon in his absence due to the necessity of speeding up production, and that recognizing his ability and grasp of detail, it had been decided to make him Production Manager, with an office to himself, a stenographer, and a substantial increase in salary. He was to do no more map tracing himself but supervise the work as carried out by the staff which would be under him.

In his relief and gratitude Carslake was almost happy for several months. He pushed along the work of his department with zeal and introduced various schemes with a view to increased efficiency and system.

And then arrived the troublous month of May. The afternoons became very long and Carslake, because by now his department well-nigh ran itself, found many of his hours entirely unoccupied. Longings, dim in source, began to undermine his ability to concentrate. He would sit at his desk, idly fooling with the paper-cutter and twisting the top of his patented inkstand, while he gazed out of the window across the disorderly gray roofs that nicked the skyline between rising plumes of steam, without being able to dictate replies to the day's basket of letters. Tomorrow would do.

He was on his way home one bluggy afternoon when he passed a sporting goods store from which emerged three

friends, two free-lance artists and a newspaper cartoonist, grinning.

"This looks like a plot," he said to them. "What is the story?"

They were quite willing to stop and talk. They said they had just bought some supplies to be loaded on a sailing sloop which they had acquired for a trifle and on which they were preparing to sail down the coast to Cuba, thence to Panama, and on down the South American littoral.

"How far are you going?" asked Carslake.

"To the Antarctic circle," they told him. "We intend to sit there with the penguins and learn their scorn of ambition."

"Come on and go with us a piece," they added. "We'll let you off at Bimini where you can have a round of drinks before you start back."

"Bimini? Where's that?"

"An island, a British possession, about 40 miles off the Florida coast. They say it is only a few hundred yards long and that it's piled six feet high with cases of Scotch."

"Thanks, but I know a better island than that," said Carslake. "I'm just waiting until I get it copyrighted before I take possession."

And laughing at his little pleasantry, they waved him a so-long and passed on.

This incident was anguish to Carslake. Up came Imbobo to bedevil his thoughts again. But the encounter had given him an idea. Why not get a congenial chap to join with him in acquiring a small sea worthy boat and set sail for Imbobo without further waiting, say from California? Ollie Rory was out there somewhere; when last heard of he was doing pretty-girl layouts for an advertising agency. He would get Ollie's address and write to him. Ollie had always been ripe for an adventure, and very likely he would know where to pick up a broken-down old sailor who would know how to navigate the ship.

Carslake liked to think of Imbobo as uninhabited. If so, so much the better.

He and Rory could find a cave to live in, or build a rude but substantial shelter of driftwood and thatch it with palm leaves. For food they could live on fish; musn't forget hooks and lines; varied occasionally with a seal steak. But did seals frequent tropical isles? No. Well then, fish.

Fish fried on the beach over the multi-colored flames that spurt from salt-soaked wood and eaten out under the stars to the tune of the tumbling surf—wow! Better six months of that than a thousand years of rubbing coat buttons against an arid desk top.

IV

BUT before he got a chance to write to Rory, his employers called him in again and informed him that he had been so successful with the map end of the business that they wished to place him in entire charge of it, so as to leave their hands free to attend to other departments of the growing concern. He would be made General Manager and would be given an interest in the business, with the right to obtain a substantial block of stock for which he could pay gradually out of his salary.

Carslake went home that evening on wings, for now he saw a chance to get ahead of the game within a reasonably short time and be able to free his mind from money worries. Mrs. Carslake rejoiced with him, but later she became a little thoughtful.

The next evening they put the children to bed early and slipped out for a little celebrative dinner. When they had finished their coffee, Mrs. Carslake pushed her cup and saucer aside and said she wished to talk seriously with him a moment. Now that their prospects were so good, she said she thought it was time to see about buying a home where they could enjoy some of the comforts of life and where the children could have better advantages; it was a shame to try to rear growing children in the cramped quarters of a city flat.

Carslake agreed with that; but he thought the proposition in general could wait over a year or two. Let him get himself well entrenched first, he suggested, and then they could look around. Mrs. Carslake replied impatiently and an unfortunate dispute arose. The attending waiter was summoned abruptly and paid off in silence, but in less than a week he recognized Carslake as the latter entered a real estate office which specialized in fancy suburban properties.

The house which Mrs. Carslake selected was situated in the semi-fashionable offshoot of a really fashionable town. It was a nice property and Carslake got possession on quite reasonable terms, the reason for which he understood when he tried to heat the house the following winter. However, it was near the country club, which Carslake soon joined and in which he met a number of men who were of some importance in the city. One of them, it turned out, was interested in a map-making concern which was the leading competitor of Carslake's own. This man went out of his way to cultivate Carslake, and one day surprised him by asking him to come over and join his house at a salary which he hinted would be twice Carslake's present once. But Carslake demurred. He explained that his people had been very fair to him and that he felt obligated to consult them before making any move. When he told his people of the offer, they said instantly that he need go no further, because they had virtually completed arrangements to have him elected vice-president and to make him a present of the unpaid balance of his stock.

The excitement of his success distracted Carslake's mind from dreams of Imbobo for the next year. He had never known what it was before to have money to spend over and above expenses, but now within a short time he was able to own a bank account, a motor car, an expensive insurance policy, an account at two department stores, and a tutor for his children.

He soon realized that the easiest way to make money was to have some in the first place. Opportunities for investment came from right and left; people told him of "little buys," "good things," and profitable deals because they wanted business from his concern, because they thought his friendship would be valuable, or simply because they were in a mellow mood. Some of these ventures cost him substantial sums, but those that were profitable were so much so that they made up for the losses and greatly fattened his bank account.

In less than five years he heard himself referred to one day as a "successful young business man." This gave him a shock. He did not mind being spoken of as successful, but to be regarded as a business man was somehow repellant. He still liked to think of himself as an artist who was only temporarily lending himself to business.

V

THE chance remark he had overheard made him a bit broody, and to test himself he ran away from his family and friends one Sunday, took a long trolley ride, and then trudged across the fields and woods to the banks of a little river that had not yet come within the range of picknickers and their wads of Sunday newspapers.

He found a spot well screened by trees and undergrowth and set up his old easel. His hand trembled a little as he did so, for a fear was eating him—a fear that his hand would not respond to the old impulses. But the first few movements eased his mind. He could still get down upon the board what he wanted to put there. What disturbed him was something unsuspected; something was wrong with his ability to see. His vision was in perfect order, but his mind remained cold. It would not grasp, it would not select, it would not translate anything except in exact matter-of-fact terms.

The fresh floods of feeling that used to make him think that to be a painter

was to be the next thing to the Creator no longer arose. What he saw in front of him bored him; absolutely nothing came from it.

Several times he wiped out what he had made and finally he closed his paint box in disgust.

"Nature is out of date anyhow," he said to himself for comfort. "The old-timers exhausted her years ago. I'll fix me up a studio at home and go in for the abstract."

But he went away without feeling as good as he did the day before.

His experience set him thinking, however, and by the time he had reached home he had almost made up his mind to cut loose from everything and start for Imbobo regardless. There, he felt certain, would be refreshment for his soul and clarity for his mind. On that island, given six months of freedom, he would rediscover Reality.

Moreover, he felt that Providence was directing him when at dinner the next evening his wife said to him suddenly:

"John, you look tired. Why don't you take a long holiday? The firm owes it to you. You've done nothing but work and plan for them ever since they took you in. Why not take a trip out West? Things are going along well with us here at home now and you wouldn't need to worry about us."

He looked at her quickly. But her face was sincerely concerned. Despite her well developed ability to read his thoughts, she did not suspect his dreams of Imbobo, so he considered it enough to say that he would think it over and possibly he could arrange to take a little trip somewhere.

He made up his mind to arrange with his people for a six-months' leave of absence the very next day. He felt disillusioned about prosperity and thoroughly tired of the constant necessity of putting oneself at other people's disposal. Now was the time to make a break. He would give it out that he wanted to go to China; which,

indeed, he did, but only as a stopping place on the way to the magic isle. When he was a sufficient number of thousands of miles away, he would wire back his resignation and write to Gladys to see his bankers for any funds she needed.

When he reached the office, one of his old employers was waiting for him. He told Carslake excitedly that the firm had, after long effort, landed an order from a certain mogul at the head of a big concern—a small order but one that paved the way to a tremendous business. This mogul was a wary fish, but there was a way to win him over—cater to his passion for hunting and fishing. Would Carslake please arrange to take the client up to the partner's Adirondack camp, stay with him night and day, and give him his fill of the outdoor life? The opportunity was too big to lose. The plum must positively be culled.

There was enough lure about the thought of an Adirondack camp and the instant release from the office to cause Carslake to assent. When he returned a month later, with the mogul's goodwill permanently won, he felt so re-

freshed that he decided to put Imbobo off for another season.

VI

JOHN CARSLAKE had become a well-to-do and respected citizen, with a wonderful home filled with curios from the East and a lengthened waistband, when he died after a short illness from rheumatism of the heart.

He must have realized that he could not recover, for after his death, the following note, recently dated, was found scribbled at the end of his will:

"I have no witnesses at hand, but I earnestly request my executors to set aside the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) the annual interest from which shall be given to some poor and obscure artist, to be selected at random, in order that he may pay his fare to the Island of Imbobo, in the Pacific Ocean; or any other island that he may prefer. But the fund shall be called the Imbobo Fund."

"Where did he get that name?" asked someone.

"Heaven only knows," said Mrs. Carslake. "So like John!"



A Song for Poets

By Theodosia Garrison

HOW many smiles will you give me for a story?

A story made of jeweled words and little, flashing rhymes.

How many kisses for a poem in your glory

Vibrant with your beauty as a steeple full of chimes?

A caravan of loveliness I spread you merchant-wise

For your smiles and your kisses and the flame within your eyes."

She offered for his story a little hint of pity,

She offered for his poem a yawn she could not hide;

All the jewels of his praise, melting words or witty

She held them up, she threw them down, she brushed them all aside.

And she gave her smiles and kisses and the eyes that burned him through
For a trinket and a feather and a tawdry gown or two.

Matrimony No. 6497

By Orrick Johns

I

HOW he had missed her! Three weeks now — Lord, it seemed longer than that. Well, well, the dear child was enjoying herself, having an innocent good time. Yes, she needed a rest all right. He wasn't the one to begrudge her that. No, sirree. He was lucky to have such a girl, such a dear, good girl to work for, and send away on a holiday. Wasn't he, though!

He'd really expected her the night before. Well, halfway, anyhow. Not exactly expected her, but then there had been a chance she would get in. Of course, they'd have had to drive pretty fast, two hundred and fifty, two hundred and seventy-five—about two hundred and seventy-five miles a day. That was right steady motoring. It would wear on you. Naturally, they'd want to take it easier than that, not want to get to the city after their fine holiday all worn out. They were probably doing under two hundred.

Still, he had been mighty disappointed last night. He hadn't gone to bed until one, thinking there was still hope. Oh well, he'd been unreasonable. He really shouldn't have expected them last night. But to-night! Ha, ha, that was a different matter. They'd be in to-night. What time was it? Seven o'clock. Well, he must keep cool, he mustn't be too sure. He must give them plenty of time, not get ruffled. They'd be rolling in before ten anyway. He wouldn't think about it, and then they'd surprise him. Any minute the bell might ring.

It would have been nicer, of course, if she and her friends had come by train. Trains were so certain. You could count on something with them. No suspense, just wait till the time came and there you were and there she was, and as she hove into sight you rushed for her and held her in your arms. But he wouldn't begrudge her the fun of motoring. It was hard, of course, not knowing anything positive, but pshaw, he could stand his end, all right!

Eight o'clock. Well, that's fine, every hour brings her nearer. No use being impatient. Why, if they didn't get in till midnight there was still no reason for not expecting them. Now that they were right here, nearly, they'd take the last lap easy. And besides, if they happened to be too far away to reach town for dinner, they'd stop somewhere and dine. That would be two hours. That would make it ten o'clock, ten-thirty, right there. Ha, ha, they were probably sitting somewhere at that moment, eating a big dinner. They'd come along, just hold your horses, old fellow.

He was ready for them. The maid had been in all day the day before, and an hour to-day for the final touch. Everything sparkled like new. Yes, sir, it was a dear little place. All it needed now was her to make it perfect. And if her friends dropped in for a while—of course they wouldn't stay long, they'd understand better than that—but if they did drop in, there was the new case of gin, lots of fruit and things in the ice-box; cold lobster, plenty of Scotch. Yes, a cocktail or two gave a sort of glow to reunions. And they'd

be grateful for a bite if they got in a little late. He wouldn't have forgotten those little details. Not he! And all the marketing done for their little breakfast together.

Yeah, but that wasn't the best of it. How pleased she would be to hear about the big policy he had sold. Money? Oh, boy! She'd find more money in the family exchequer than she ever expected to find. He hadn't even hinted at it in his letters. Oh, he'd been tempted. It was such good news, hard to keep. But no, he'd resisted, he'd just written as though things were jogging along in the same old modest, fairly satisfactory way. What a secret for her! She'd buy things, no need to skimp. Little frocks and boots, and stockings — she was always fussing about stockings. And those tiny silk affairs. All hers had been getting threadbare. Every time she dressed she had to paw over everything in the drawer to find a whole one. He could picture her standing there now, so demure, so smooth and snowy, looking for something fit to cover her. Gosh, how sweet she was, how adorable!

Well, well, three years, three years and still lovers. Oh, they'd had their little tiffs; sometimes he'd almost felt a momentary hate had got the better of them. But what did they amount to? The honest-to-God truth was, it was all because they were too much in love. And naturally jealous, of course, and naturally too sensitive. When you were really hurt, why you got all the more angry. Anybody could see that. Yes, sir; too much in love, she herself said so often. The worst thing was to be indifferent, not to care. He'd rather have anything happen than that.

Hm, ten-thirty. He got up and walked back and forth the length of the two rooms. God, how restless he was. If she would only come, damn it, if she — But now, now, old fellow, keep your control, don't crab it, hold on to yourself. You must realize you don't know what they are up against

Last tire blown out in an out of the way place, somebody in the party a little sick—why, there are a thousand reasons you're entirely ignorant of that might hold them up. Just sit tight. They'll be bowling in.

He thought it would be nice to take a walk out in the air. Kind of tired raging up and down here like a caged bear. Change of scene might get his mind off of it. But no, they would just as likely come while he was out, it wasn't quite twelve yet and that's just about the time he'd really expected them all along. He wouldn't have her arrive and find him not there for the world. Dear little girl. *She* was doing *her* best to get there, he could count on that. *She* wasn't running the car, it wasn't *her* fault.

There were her letters in a pile on his writing table. He'd left them there for her to find. No deception about that, no pose. He'd really read them, nearly every night. He picked them up and sat down. What inimitable letters they were. He lingered over the little endearments, not the opening and closing ones—they were expected—but the little spontaneous ones that crept into the flying sentences. How he had missed her, the things she did for him, the way she kept him in order. Well, sir; he'd done things for *her* this trip. Yep, everything wonderfully ship-shape, better than she'd ever come back to before.

Great Scot, two o'clock! Now, now, what was the matter? An accident? Could they——? Say, he couldn't stand this much longer. It was getting on his nerves. Gee whiz, what a wait! Oh what the—see here, cool off! Cool off, you fool, you poor fish. What are you doing, losing your head? Don't be a bonehead, she's nearly here, certainly bound to be here in the morning, early to-morrow. You're not going to spoil everything at the last minute, are you?

For that matter, they might — just possibly—get in to-night even yet. Better wait up. If they get near enough to town to make it, even late, very late,

they'd keep going, of course. It was good weather, roads deserted. They wouldn't waste a night at a hotel, they'd come right on in, just for a lark. And if you're up—say! I guess that'll prove you're a sport.

II

HE was awakened a little after eight, with three hours' sleep, by the jangling of a bell announcing a telegraph boy. The yellow slip read:

"Leaving Albany early arrive four afternoon can't wait. Love."

Now, now, that was sweet of her, wasn't it? She knew what he'd been through last night. She'd been thinking about him. Wasn't she with him every minute? He took a deep breath, swung his arms, bent over briskly, began to whistle, and ran for his bath. Wide-awake as a bird, by George! Not even gummy, feeling fit.

(Splash.) Yep, that's something definite (splash, splash, splash), something — fouie! — fellow could go by (zoom) made you feel (pew) different, that did. Of course she'd think of it, the sweet little devil! She'd put him wise (glugle, glugle, glugle, bang), now he could rest easy and know what's what. Say, it was lucky it was Saturday, no engagements, free at one o'clock. All day to-morrow with *her*.

As midday approached he felt little shivers travel over him. The last half hour in the office was intolerable. He'd lunch slowly, read the Saturday papers. That would kill time, make it easier. He'd be there when she arrived. He pictured the first glimpse of her, the first embrace, her first laugh. What a little wife!

At quarter to one the phone rang. It was Smith. Smith, eh? Go up and lunch with him at two? He'd have to think quick. Of course it was important. He and Smith were working on a big deal together. It meant money, good money. But then there was just a chance, just a possibility he'd be detained too long to get home at four. That wouldn't do. He couldn't think

of it. But he couldn't put Smith off very well. What would Smith think? No engagement should keep a man from doing a good piece of business like that.

Of course there was small chance he'd be late. And if he was, hadn't he waited two nights, all night last night? Say, she'd get that when he told her. She was a peach. Why, how could he doubt her? It was wonderful, that understanding between them, a miracle really, he sometimes thought. Oh, it would kind of spoil things, if she found him away—just a little, just at first. But pshaw, she'd laugh that off, wouldn't give it a thought. Yes, he'd take a chance.

At five o'clock, with beating heart, he let himself into his apartment house entrance. He leaped up the stairs three at a time, rattled the key in his own door—their own dear little door—and entered. Yes, there she was. Thank God, there she was! But say, why didn't she look at him, what was she turned around that way for? Why, she hadn't even taken her hat off. That's a funny way to say hello to a fellow—you'd have thought he was intruding—a stranger, a burglar.

Oh, so that's it! Very well, so that's the idea, is it? Bitter looks, eh? Cold shoulder, eh? Well, two could play at that game. I guess he hadn't stayed up all night. I guess she'd been so awfully thoughtful, so kind—telegraphing him only at the last minute. Hadn't thought of it at all the day before. I guess he hadn't stayed home, and missed her, and worked and made money. Say, *he* could throw the chill into his voice, too. He began to stride the floor importantly.

"So, this is the way you receive a fellow, is it—after three weeks' absence?"

"When you're two hours late?"

"Only one hour late, old dear!"

"I've been sitting here like a fool, like a bump on a log, for two hours and a half."

"You telegraphed four."

"Well, what if I did? Couldn't you *expect* me a little earlier. Couldn't you

at least have been here at four?"

"I had——"

"I don't care what you had!"

"I——"

"You——"

"You——"

"I——"

"Damn it, this is a hell of a nice thing. Say, this is great! After three weeks!"

"Cursing, are you—that's the respect you have for me!"

"I'll — I'll — if you knew what I'd been through!"

"Pooh, if you knew how I've felt."

"Selfish, thoughtless——"

"Don't you dare address me that way. Don't you stand there criticizing me. You cad!"

"You——"

"You——"

III

HE woke heavily, listlessly to the sound of the telephone bell beside his bed. He reached over and answered it.

"Eight o'clock, sir," said the girl at the switchboard.

"Oh yes, yes; thank you," he answered a little too effusively. How awful his mouth felt, dry and fuzzy as a weed. Oh, yes, of course, the hotel, the Marquette. He looked over on the chair. His suitcase, open, the contents scattered. Ha, ha, of course, he remembered how she had thrown his shirts and collars and things at him, told him to get out. Good God, had he lost her? What had he gone out for! Why hadn't he controlled himself, let it pass over, soothed her somehow? She'd think—heaven knows what she'd think. She'd think he was with a woman. Maybe he— He looked fiercely at the other side of the bed. It was empty. Ha, ha! As if he would, as if he ever had. Not he!

"Good Lord, what did I do?"

He sat up sharply in bed trying to think clearly. As he did so he felt a pain in his nose. Yes, there were marks on it, deep marks. And it had bled, he remembered that, how it had bled.

Why, there were the two big wads of handkerchiefs on the dresser, filled with blood. Damn her, it was an indignity, it was awful. Thank goodness, he had kept cool, held in his anger to some extent; at least he'd left the violence to her. Yes, he'd been all right before he left the house. It was afterward he had started to drink. Gosh, how his head ached!

The telephone rang. He picked it up gingerly. The room, the place, was still strange to him. All his movements seemed a little guilty. Oh, it was probably just the girl with a second call. He'd left a very positive order, he remembered.

"Hello."

"Darling!" came the voice over the wire.

"Darling!" he replied huskily.

"It's you? Tell me it's you."

"Of course, dear. How did you know I was here?"

"I just knew it. Something whispered to me just now, 'he's at the Marquette'."

"That's right. I was just thinking of you, too. It must have been telepathy."

"Darling, are you feeling well? Are you all right? I'm—I'm such a dreadful girl."

"Pshaw, it's nothing—nothing at all. Don't you worry."

"Everything's forgiven?"

"Why, of course. How can you ask? Say, you sound good to me!"

"Then tum right away to your baby. I tan't wait."

"Yes, dear; wight away."

"You bessed, hurry, hurry!"

"You precious. Tourse I will."

He leaped from the bed, pressing the button hard for the water, and running into the bathroom.

"Coffee and rolls, quick," he shouted.

Gosh, how long it took a fellow to get dressed. Damned nuisance, dressing. And that little darling waiting. How delicious her voice had sounded. And how adorable she was to think of calling. Guesswork, too! Oh, she was just too sweet to live.

Amo, Amas, Amat

By Charles G. Shaw

I

NO romance is able to survive a sense of logic in the man or a sense of humor in the woman.

II

A woman in love fears a man who is cruel, a man who is desperate, a man who is worldly—but none of them half so much as she fears another woman.

III

A man's relations with women end in one of two ways: either wishing he knew more about them or wishing he knew less.

IV

A woman weeps for three reasons: delight, disappointment, and deception.

V

Beware of the woman who says "no" with her lips and, at the same time, "yes" with her eyes. She seldom means either.

VI

One's past romance fall into one of two groups: memories and mistakes.

VII

Once that a woman believes a man is in love with her she immediately accuses him of being in love with another woman.

VIII

A man in love spends his lonely moments in devising pretty speeches to warble to his amourese, and when with her passes the time in either being downright dumb or else in wrangling with her.

IX

Curiosity, companionship and comfort are the chief causes for a man marrying a woman. Egotism is the only one for a man falling in love with a woman.

X

The happiest moments of married life are those spent in reminiscing.

XI

A woman looks for understanding in a man, a man for tenderness in a woman. Both are immediately placed on their guard when they discover these qualities in the other.

XII

Men may grow sophisticated by experience but never less amorous.

XIII

A woman in love is never happy until she is perfectly convinced that she is able to make the man unhappy.

XIV

The woman who is interested in a man seeks to analyze, to dissect, to solve him. The woman who is in love with a man seeks not to analyze, to dissect, to solve him.

XV

No woman is as tender or as cruel as she appears to the man who is in love with her.

XVI

A woman's snap-judgment of a man is more than often a sound verdict, while her subsequent opinion of him is rarely of any value whatsoever.

XVII

A man wonders who were the other men of a woman's past; a woman wonders who will be the other women of a man's future.

XVIII

The longest love affairs have never been the most intimate ones, just as the greatest love affairs are by no means the happiest.

On the True Music Lover

By Walter E. Sagmaster

I

I DOUBT if there is anything on this dear; sweet, lovely old earth more rare than a real, honest-to-God, straight-from-the-wood music lover. Music is peculiar among the arts in that it has more bogus, lukewarm, invalid, charlatanistic, and mountebankistic adherents than any of the others. Out of ten men who profess an interest in sculpture, all of them will be genuine. Out of ten men who profess an interest in painting, eight of them will be genuine. Out of ten men who profess an interest in literature, seven of them will be genuine. But out of ten men who profess an interest in music, you are lucky to find two who fundamentally, intrinsically, psychically, and cardiacally mean, think, and feel what they say; you are lucky to find two who have any opinion, good, bad or indifferent, of Bach or Beethoven, Mozart or Mendelssohn, Dukas or D'Indy, save that their compositions seem to have attained rather wide celebration for some reason or other, and consequently are great, and consequently should be admired by all men and women who have any consideration for prestige. . . .

What is a true music lover? Is he one who spends a certain number of hours a day for eight or nine years attempting to train his fingers to the point where they will more or less automatically, and with a certain rapidity, produce a succession of notes on a piano or violin? Is he one who dons the conventional black, or the conventional jewels, and sits importantly before an aggregation of musicians from 8:30 to 10:30 P.M. twice a month? Is

he one whose mind is occupied solely with the possibility of executing a cadenza faster than any human being ever did before or shall ever do again? Is he one who believes that the art of music reached its very pinnacle of expression in the vocal gymnastics of the late Caruso, or of the contemporary Galli-Curci?

No, the true music lover is not necessarily any of these, and necessarily not most of them. The true music lover is simply one whose emotions—whose joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, loves and hates, ambitions and discouragements—find their most complete resolution, their most lucid explanation, their most fundamental significance, and their most perfect sympathetic complement, in music. When the true music lover solves a particularly knotty problem of existence, or when he executes a chef d'œuvre of respectable magnitude, his soul bursts forth into song, albeit of another's composition—song that ripples and flows, murmurs and sighs, crashes and resounds purely in the imagination, perhaps—but song none the less. And when, on the other hand, Fate trips him up and he suffers a painful and inglorious fall on his ora pro nobis, he hurries, like a world-wounded lover, with all his troubles to the ever-waiting, ever-consoling, ever-soothing mistress of all true æsthetes—Music.

When the true music lover downs an unusually stiff cocktail, switches off the lights, lifts the tongs and deftly places a bright new lump on the radiant coals, moves his fauteuil just a trifle nearer the fire, sinks into the downy leather, reclines his head, stretches his legs,

folds his hands, closes his eyes, and takes a little jaunt fifteen years or so back to the honeysuckle-entwined, moonlight-bathed wooden fence over which, whispering with that peculiarly alluring charm which the clandestine always imparts, leans an immature angel with copper hair, silver skin, and golden eyes— When the true music lover takes such a journey, he can hold his own admirably so long as merely her voice, or her caress, or her kiss comes back to him; but let him recall some piece of music that was played or sung one night while he held her fluttering hand beneath a concert hall chandelier, a vaudeville house seraph-enclustered ceiling, or, perchance, beneath a yellow moon which peeped between poplars into a tinkling beergarden—let the music he recalls be the Waldstein Sonata, the “Merry Widow” waltz, or “I Love My Wife But Oh You Kid!” and out comes the handkerchief, wilted goes the collar, red goes the nose, and black goes the sadly neglected fire, just as sure as God made babies.

Personally, the “Merry Widow” waltz type of girl has dampened more of my handkerchiefs than any other. She returns to me in many forms: the “Babes in the Woods” song from “Very Good Eddie!”; the “When You’re Away” song from “The Only Girl”; the “Will You Remember?” song from “Maytime”; etc., etc. And every time she comes the effect is lethal. Recollection of the Waldstein Sonata type of girl is apt to be more or less attenuated by an interest in the music itself, and the “I Love My Wife,” etc. type by a touch of chagrin at succumbing to the wiles of such banal concoctions, but the “Merry Widow” waltz type is as irresistible as swiss cheese sandwiches and malt liquor before retiring, and as fatal as Jack Dempsey. . . .

Most of the true music lovers I have found know almost as little about the technique of music as they know about the technique of obtaining a seat in the United States House of Representatives, and, if such a thing is possible, care even less. The technique of mu-

sic has no more to do, in the last analysis, with the love of music, than the technique of woman has to do with the love of woman. A man may be unable to distinguish between a canon in augmentation and an unresolved seventh, but he may be an ardent music lover for all that, just as a man may be unable to distinguish between a woman’s genuine interest in his egoistic recitations and that bogus interest which, with the most consummate artistry, she feigns in order to keep him faithfully at her side—and yet he may love her as only a straightforward, upright, honest American man can love a good, pure, noble American woman.

Indeed, the trouble with many people is that their original genuine interest in music—if never very lively, an interest just the same—has been killed off by the devastating onslaughts of technique. No man can derive his full quota of pleasure in contemplating an October moon if he reasons that its substance is merely a large ball of dead matter and its color merely the result of this body reflecting another planet’s light through a wall of fog thick enough to cut with a rusty penknife. No man can derive his full quota of pleasure in contemplating a woman’s face if he reasons that the machinery behind this beauty consists in an hideously grinning skull, wrapped, for the nonce, in an outer layer of epidermis which, could it be properly viewed under a microscope, would be found to contain I forget how many millions of holes, and to exhumate hourly I forget (and hope to God I shall never remember) how many quarts of refuse toxins. To argue that one can derive little or no genuine pleasure from music unless he understands the technique of music is to argue that one can derive little or no genuine pleasure from a bottle of Chantilly unless he understands the technique of a wine-press. There is such a thing, I freely admit, as a little knowledge of what a fugue, a chorale, a dominant, etc. is, assisting the appreciation of a composition, but (unless, of course, the patient intends to compose) the

least that can be said about technique, and the least emphasis that can be placed upon it, the better. Otherwise, you may wake up some bright morning to discover that your embryo music lover has been technicized to death. Not always: there are folks and folks—but it takes a strong soul to withstand the inveigling chicanery of the theory of double counterpoint at the ninth.

Show me a music lover who has never composed, or at least never believed he composed, a melody, and I will show you a music puppy-lover. And if the real fire is there, if the intrinsic love is present in the soul, nine times out of ten the valid music lover will transfer that melody to paper, no matter how amateurishly, and attempt to reproduce it upon some instrument, no matter how primitively.

II

You may be pretty certain that if a person shows marked preference for the orchestral type of music (I do not say instrumental, for there is always the two-hundred-miles-a-minute violin concerto, as well as the solo for harp) you may be pretty certain that his claim to being a music lover has some foundation in fact. Such hybrid forms of music as opera and oratorio are contaminated with the poison of display, ceremony, spectacularism—the tinsel draperies of the art, that never fail to attract mediocre minds and blind them to the solid meat, whatever its worth, underneath. The Italians have done their dirty work in the matter of opera. *Que les morts se reposent.* . . . Equipped with some more or less reliable information on the sublimest of all the arts, they straightway began to corrupt it for something like three hundred years by writing sets of vocal exercises called “operas” — (humorously, no doubt, from the Latin “opus,” indicating that anyone who could twist his or her voice into a sufficient number of contortions and with sufficient rapidity to render the amazing volley of demi-semiquavers in which they took such naïve

delight in putting on paper would indeed be “working” in the fullest sense of the term.) The camp-followers of the Ancient Order of the Coloratura may have diminished in number, perhaps, but by no means have they been annihilated. They form a considerable body of the present-day “music lovers.”

As for the spectacular scenic display and pageantry of opera, the blame may be laid, carefully concealed in an infernal machine disguised as a bottle of German beer, on the doorsteps of the French. However, regardless of the blame, the fact remains that next to that class of people who go to the opera because it is “the thing,” and that class who go to the opera for the delectation of watching an elderly Italian lady breaking her neck in an effort to achieve the proverbial high-C, comes that class who go to opera because they want to see Samson lean on the cardboard pillars and drop three tons of papier-maché brick and mortar on the Philistines, or to see a two-hundred-and-ninety-seven-pound Rhadames carried downstage in a super-rickshaw borne on the shoulders of ten ex-stagehands, between a German brass-band and sixty young women in pink kimonos throwing geraniums on the linoleum.

Your true music lover is far more apt to be found in a concert hall, with a full orchestra ranged before him and the celestial harmonies of Beethoven floating through the roof and losing themselves somewhere among the stars—though Allah the All-Merciful knows that not everyone you will find at an orchestral concert is a true music lover.

And now that we have reached the concert hall, after having disposed of people who get red in the face, foam at the mouth, gyrate up and down in their seat, and applaud until their hands ache when a seventeen-year-old Russian Jew plays every note from the rock bottom of the G to the tip-top of the E string and back again in $2\frac{7}{8}$ seconds flat, people who teach piano, and people who have the slightest respect for the “Poet and Peasant” overture, the “Humoresque,” “Il Trovatore,” the saxo-

phone, or the repertoire of John McCormack—now that we have reached the concert hall, and now that the orchestra is arranged before us, and now that the director is a little tardy, being off-stage indulging in a preliminary quaff of contraband Old Oscar Pepper prior to tackling the "Pathétique," let us consider the final test of the true music lover.

Granting that, whatever his number, he is to be found in a concert hall; granting, further, that he must of necessity prefer if not insist upon some kind of orchestral rendition for his money, let us see wherein his chief interest lies. If in the soloist, he is hopelessly bogus. If in the director, he is but little better. If in the orchestra itself, you are getting warmer; but if in the composer—Ah, good Christian friend, you have struck gold! For chief interest in the soloist signifies love of applause, in which the auditor sub-consciously identifies himself with the virtuoso; chief interest in the director signifies love of interpretation (and often of interpolation), in which the auditor is more concerned with what one man thinks about another man's music than he is in the music of that other man himself; chief interest in the orchestra signifies love of craftsmanship, which, in its highest and purest form, is not entirely unlaudable; but chief interest in the composer signifies love of one thing and one thing only—music.

For music is (or at least, should be) nothing abstract, nothing that may be taken up at leisure and called whatever one may choose to call it at the moment. No, music—even that music which most nearly approaches the abstract: the music, say, of Bach, is the life history of a man in all its details. All valid art is biographical philosophy, but music is more so than any of the others. In the Sistine Madonna, true enough, we have glimpses of Raphael; in the Herms, true enough, we have snatches of Praxiteles; in "The Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson," true enough, we have almost the entire body and soul of Mr. James Boswell; but in the Symphony in C-minor, No. 5, we *have* Ludwig

van Beethoven, corpus, spiritus, and musty green beetle-backed dress-coat with copious gravy spots on both lapels. A composer's contribution to the storehouse of music is that composer's autobiography, and a far more faithful and intelligible autobiography than he would ever have been able to transmit by means of language.

All art is at the mercy of its medium. Sculpture and painting are certainly not unhampered; both canvas and pigment, marble and chisel, are not only limited in their capacity to embrace the entire ideational content of a man's terrestrial existence, but are obstinate substances at best for the transmission of so elusive and subtle a thing as art. Literature is fairly shackled by its medium; it wears the ball and chain of Language about its ankle.

But music is transmitted through the medium of such stuff as dreams are made of. We will never get any nearer to disembodied spirit than pure sound. Incurable materialist though I am, there are times when, in listening to a symphony by Beethoven or Brahms, or a quartet by Schubert or Mozart, I am very nearly tempted to take out papers in the Catholic Church and make plans toward insuring the salvation of my soul and entrance into that heaven which, I then feel, must assuredly exist.

But that is neither here nor there. . . . Granting, then, that music is the purest autobiography, it will be seen that the true music lover's primary interest will be in the man behind the music. (Just as the true book lover's primary interest will be in the man behind the book.) When he listens to music, he will listen in terms of that man. When he talks of music, he will talk in terms of that man. Nay—when he so much as thinks of music, that man will so dominate his thoughts, pervade his heart, and absorb his soul, as to make any such deification of orchestra-leaders, first-violins, soloists, costumers, scene-painters, stage-directors, etc., as the mediocre mind delights in, nothing short of the most flagrant blasphemy and the grossest sacrilege.

A Wake

By Joseph Michael Lalley

MRS. CARMODY was brought out of her thoughts that were half dreams by the sense that her daughter, Mary, had gone from the side of her. From her place on the haircloth sofa Mrs. Carmody observed the girl standing a little distance away, staring at the door. Her head was thrust forward, her mouth hung open and her fingers clutched upon her rigid breasts.

Mrs. Carmody knew well that the girl ought not to have been kept at home all the long hard while it had taken her uncle to die. But where to have sent her?—no relatives in Chicago, scarce any at all in America. . . . She was a nervous girl—hysterical sometimes. When spells such as this came over her she needed to be comforted or scolded or let alone, according as Mrs. Carmody was able to interpret the nature of them.

She was a good girl for all of her queerness, as David Carmody, who was now—God have mercy on him!—perhaps in Purgatory, knew well. She had been into his room and out of it as often as was wanted, carrying in and away the trays of victuals that he would hardly taste of, changing the bedclothes, dropping out his medicines (God help them, what a world of money the physic had cost and small good it did him!), praying with him when he felt the need of it, which was often. Sure, she had been there at last when the priest came to give the Holy Anointment and when. . . .

Besides, Mrs. Carmody could not

have done without her help with the housework.

Mrs. Carmody rose. She was about to say in the proper voice of soothing firmness, "Come, Mary, now—" when a shudder broke the cateleptoid posture of the girl.

A clock was striking.

A sudden, curious dread took hold of Mrs. Carmody as she realized that the sound came from the room where the dead lay. Two closed doors were between her and the clock, muffling the vibrations so that they fell bluntedly on her ears.

"That old clock!" exclaimed Mrs. Carmody shuddering herself, "—why, it's not ticked these five years!"

She fought against a foolish panic that was trying to seize her. She took the girl by the shoulders and shook her.

"Stop this silliness, Mary," she whispered, meaning the words as much for herself.

The older woman shuddered again as she felt the icy fingers of her daughter tighten about her hand, but she set her face resolutely and moved toward the door, dragging the girl with her. She pushed open the door and they went into the narrow hallway and stopped at the threshold of a bedroom. Mrs. Carmody could now make out a peculiar metallic whir that accompanied the striking of the clock.

"I wish that your father would come," said Mrs. Carmody.

She waited a moment as if half hoping to hear his tread on the stairs outside. She knew, however, how

unreasonable would be such hope. The telegram was shortly sent and it could not fetch him sooner than midnight. Too bad, indeed, that while his only brother lay dying his work must be away from the town. But he could not have left it, for from where else would be coming the money they were more than ever in need of now?—and David Carmody had been unconscious at his last hours. . . . A welcome feeling of shame was crowding dread out of the breast of Mrs. Carmody.

She carefully made the sign of the cross over herself and taking hold of the bedroom door pushed it open, letting escape into the hallway a stuffy, musty odor, something like the odor of a chapel.

The room was a small one, well swept but shabbily furnished. The single window was shut tight and the blind drawn. On a wooden bedstead that occupied almost half the room lay what until shortly had been David Carmody. The limbs and body of the dead were concealed beneath a counterpane, but the head, slightly raised, rested on a pillow so white and unwrinkled that it was plain to have been but lately put there. The features were those of a man of forty, showing in an unpleasantly rugged profile the peculiar wastage of phthisis. The death pallor relieved somewhat by the franker whiteness of the bed-clothing seemed scarce deeper than the pallor grown on the living women who had come beside. In accordance with precept, wax tapers set into flat china candlesticks burned at the head and feet of the dead and the soft light of these gave to the room a fitting effect of dreamless rest and hopeless peace that was now perversely broken by the chiming of the clock.

The clock stood on a rude wooden shelf that was nailed into the wall at a right angle from the head of the bed. After long years of precarious service elsewhere it had been relegated to that shelf by Mrs. Carmody

in obedience to an inhibition which the needy have against throwing away anything, however worthless. Its case was of brown wood, unvarnished, or else the varnish had long since worn off. The cardboard face was yellow and scarred and the motionless hands pointed, as they had throughout several years, to eighteen minutes past seven o'clock. A rusty pendulum lay on the shelf beside the clock seeming to disclaim for itself any part in the ghoulish racket.

Due possibly to some circumstance of light and shade, or maybe to some quirk of her senses, it seemed to Mrs. Carmody that the face of the clock was regarding the dead man with a stealthy, ominous leer. For by degrees a superstitious terror had taken hold of her, half paralyzing her reason and numbing her limbs. This was a little more than the native fear of the dead, a fear, rather, of something that seemed to threaten the repose of the dead; whether of his body only or of both body and soul, she could not tell. Betimes there grew into her the impulse to make rid of this influence, or at least of its horrible articulate symbol, the clock. She jerked her hand suddenly out of Mary's and reached for a chair that stood in a corner of the room. Her hands, frozen stiff, it seemed, a moment before, now moved so violently she could scarce take hold of it. She managed at length to drag it underneath the shelf.

With the effort of these movements and a fresh assertion of the conviction innate in all Catholics that whether in life or death the good must presently prevail over the evil, fear began to take itself out of Mrs. Carmody. She climbed courageously onto the chair and stretched out her hands for the clock—meaning to take it at arms' length as though it were a thing capable of struggle. She meant to carry it to the kitchen and to bury it in the stove there and afterward to exorcise the room with holy water. It was on her lips to call the

girl to make room for her when a scarce audible sound made her look suddenly down to find that Mary had fallen to her knees on the floor. The girl's face had been transfixed into an expression of such terror that the sight of it, more unnerving than the cold stare of the dead man or the ghoulisn leer of the clock, routed in an instant Mrs. Carmody's resolution and her strength.

Then abruptly the girl's head fell upon her breast and Mrs. Carmody got down from the chair and knelt beside her.

"Jesus, have mercy!" the mother panted. "Whatever shall we do?"

Then, as the answer came to her, Mrs. Carmody reached with shaking fingers into the pocket of her skirt and drew out a wooden rosary. She was kneeling with her face toward the dead and her back to the clock. She began rapidly to count a decade of the rosary. At first she waited a breath for responses but understanding shortly that Mary had fainted finished the prayers herself. At the end of the first decade she became sensible that the clock behind them had ceased to strike, and at the end of another that Mary was breathing softly and in cadence. Whatever spell that had held them was broken. Nevertheless Mrs. Carmody continued to pray, putting the exultation of a great gratitude into her voice.

II

YET it was not until she had got Mary undressed and safe into bed and was preparing a little tea while biding the time when her man would return to her that Mrs. Carmody felt able to take sober thought on what had happened.

Had the happening been natural or no?—she saw that that was the question. That was, had it been some sudden shake of the shelf or the sudden release of some tension that had set the clock to striking? In such case the disturbance could be set

down to the laws of movement which Mrs. Carmody, though she did not wholly understand them, could credit with no interest in the dead. If that were all—but only then—no more need be thought of it, except that for the good of their nerves the clock should be got rid of. That was a thing that could be delayed until morning. No need to go into the room again now, when she could do it as well in daylight and after the undertaker's man had taken away the body.

The fright had been perhaps foolish, but it was over and, as far as she could tell, no great harm done to herself or to Mary by it. The prayers—Lord forbid that she should be sharp about them!—could be marked to credit or loss. She poured her tea and bethought to warm another cup and saucer for the husband who would be home directly; before she had done with her own, she was thinking.

But when she had drunk two cups of tea and then three; when she had raked the fire and banked it for the night; when, still alone, she had settled down in the kitchen rocker, uneasiness gradually came back to her. The tea had livened her imagination a little and she set to thinking of the corpse in the house and that it was a wake by herself she was keeping.

The man over whose body she was having watch—at a distance, more shame to her!—she had never known well. In the County Clare, whence he came and herself and her husband, she had seen him but the once and of that time she could remember only that though there was a feast he would not eat, and though there was music he would not dance, and though there was whiskey aplenty he had not drunk of it. (*May perpetual light shine upon him!*) He had just returned, so they told her, from having been a long while gone to be made a Christian Brother, but why he had come back without a cassock, no one appeared to know. She

had guessed it was mostly for want of strength for then he was already pale and coughing much. Long before she was married to his brother he had left the Old Land and not for eighteen years did she see him again.

Yes, after she had forgot him entirely he had come stumbling into them one night, so far gone that before the night was out he had coughed into a hemorrhage. Where all he had been and how he had known how to find them was more than they could learn. He had some money and a Canadian assurance policy which he gave them, saying that he wished to die with such kin as he had here, for he would not have lasted a journey across the water. True enough for him: but, *musha*, he had not enough altogether to pay for the doctor and his physic, to say nothing of his burial and the Mass for his soul that he must have. (*Deliver his soul, O, Lord! Let it rest in peace!*)

Now God forgive her, but say it she must, she had never taken kindly to the man. There was that about him that gave her a creepiness, and once she spoke to her husband of it. But he would say nothing of this queer brother except, "Mind he does be having what he needs and that he does not be putting notions into your own head."

Well, only twice had he asked for what she thought was out of the way at all, the time he had given her wits the jumps by wishing she would squeeze him the sup of blood from some raw meat and once again when he asked for a book with an outlandish name that she looked high and low among his things for without finding. As for notions, she gave him small chance to try them on her. She kept as little in his way as she could and grateful she had been to Mary for taking the burden of his care and grateful he must have been himself, for never one complaint did she hear from him the two month long—(*Hail, Mary; full of grace—*)

A bit fey he was maybe. She remembered the young curate who was had to shrive him and give the oils. He had come from the room with his face screwed into puzzlement—an odd way, she thought, for a priest to be coming from a dying bed. They were new to the parish, and strangers to this curate, and though he asked questions she did no more than answer them, and asked him no questions in her turn. . . .

Mrs. Carmody recollected with a little shiver of shame that it was praying for the man she should be, like a Christian, and that if the like of her had fault to find with him, all the more need had he for her prayers. She began to recite again, with more attention, what she knew of the office for the repose of souls. These monotonous cadences to which she accompanied the movements of her rocker, with the repetition of such words as *rest* and *peace* put her after awhile into a dreaming slumber.

III

SHE dreamed of being young again and presently she could see that she was back in the little cottage near Cloonlara. Her hair was loose about her shoulders and it was in her bare feet that she was moving over the earthen floor. There were flour and potatoes and meal and, aye, meat, in the cupboard and more peat and wood beyond than they would need burn in a twelvemonth. Sure she was with no care at all. And she was singing.

'Cuishle machree; and will ye marry me?

—D'ye fancy the bouncin' young Barney Magee?

Her man had been to Limerick and she was watching the road for him. She was baking a potato cake for him in the ashes and the kettle was on the hob. . . . But what was it now that was pulling at her petticoat? Himself! The little precious! Ah, who was it said they had buried him!

Who would have deceived her! . . . Come to your mother—to mother, Blessed, to be hugged tighter than your skin! . . . Ah! Oh! the black wee hands! Playing with the pots was it? Hold them up! hold them up!—the wee hands now. . . . There . . . There. Bright and new as Sunday morning!

*Ora, 'twas on a Sunday morning,
Along the road to Mass—*

Joey. . . . Now, Joey, now! . . . Not to be waking your sister, bouchaleen! Go outside then and play with the wee pig. . . . Oh, musha, you've done it! Hush, little darling, hush! 'Tis only your brother, Joey, showing the whole Cloonlara, how big and brave itself he is. . . . Has Banagher got the boy? Stop, Joey—won't you heed me?—stop! Why, it's a tin plate he has got and banging on it with a wooden spoon. . . . Peace now or I'll lay the spoon over the rear for you.

Then it seemed to Mrs. Carmody that she had the infant girl in her arms, and it seemed that the red head and red nightgown of the little boy had melted into one pair of huge and flaming arms with which he made the noise that grew intolerable to her ears, and it seemed that she was rushing out of the cottage. She ran down the road and across the fields. She fled across the Shannon and Blackwater and Bride. She fled over the great ocean but Joey, with his plate and spoon, pursued. Never ceasing to beat with them he chased her with the baby now among the doorways of Harlem, now about the shanties of the Pennsylvania foundry town and now through the sooty streets of the great Chicago itself. Now they were at the flat and themselves locked in; but he was down on the sidewalk banging away on his devilish plate dong, dong. . . .

She should get Mary away and into the country where there was no noise and where the real milk was. She was a good girl—but nervous. . . . Shout to him, Mary,

that's the good child. He'll mind as you tell him and stop. . . . Then close your ears to him. Do not heed him, Mary. . . . He can't harm us acuishle; I've locked the door upon him. . . . But, he's—God's life!—*at the window, Mary, banging away with his plate and spoon. Oh, Blessed Virgin help us!—has he got in then? Be off! be off with you! Would you drive us crazy with your dong, dong, dong, dong, dong, dong—*

IV

SLOWLY indeed the sound had become dislocated from Mrs. Carmody's dream, but then it was as though she had wakened in the midst of her earlier experience, save that fright was now the stronger for the suddenness with which it reassaulted her.

She was as ice all over and the heart in her seemed to have dissolved and to be running down the limbs and out of her. She could not move and she sat waiting until the things in the room would fill in the bare outlines they made against her vision. Then she heard a sound from the far end of the hallway—a cry; and with that a great sweat broke out on her and she was able to rise and go toward the sound.

As Mrs. Carmody stumbled along the black hallway there was in her a fierce fury that she had before refused to take the happening for what it was—that in her stupidity and vanity she had dared to question an omen! All the worse for her.

How plain was the warning in it, now! That was hanging over that would in a moment descend and crush them, living and dead. As she went on her head caught in an extended gas bracket and some of the hair was torn loose from her scalp. But she did not heed it and she did not stop until, at the doorway of the room where the corpse was, she slipped and pitched, head first, down. Then she felt the body of Mary underneath her own.

Words came to her. What words nor what they signified she knew not, but as they lay together she spilled them upon her daughter. There was no answer. Mrs. Carmody tried to rise and slipped again. Then she felt something that was freezing against her chin. She felt to push it away. It was the face of Mary.

Miraculous strength came to Mrs. Carmody. She pushed open the door and dragged into the room the body of her child out of which life had been forever frightened. One of the tapers had burned down and was out. Of the other but an inch was left and no more than enough to light the face of the dead man.

Dong,—dong,—dong—

Mrs. Carmody knew it was doom striking for her as well as for them already dead—and all fear was gone from her. She swore aloud while life was yet in her to have retaliation on the one thing it was possible to at-

tack. She climbed upon the dead man's bed and seized the clock. She stumbled again over her daughter's body, picked herself up and ran down the hallway. Then it was that she felt the clock twitch and twist in her hands and knew that inside it there was something incarnate seeking to escape through the little door beneath the face. Against that escape Mrs. Carmody closed the fingers of one hand tightly nor released them before she had dug with the others into the coals of the kitchen fire until she found the red hot ones and had thrust the clock face foremost into them. . . . There was a loud stamping and then a thunderous knocking and at this Mrs. Carmody sank to the floor, for it seemed to her the summons of her doom.

But her delirious ears had magnified the sounds. It was only Mr. Carmody outside the flat knocking softly to be let in.



Responsibility

By T. F. Mitchell

THE party was in full swing. Wine flowed freely and the guests were all more or less inoculated. Revelry was rampant. He felt that the affair was a success. He was the host. He took his responsibility heavily. He knew what was expected of him and he did not shirk. He was the drunkest of all.



THERE are two types of persons who seldom mean what they say: those who make love often, and those who write a lot.



EXPERT—one who can tell the difference between Chinese and Japanese lanterns.



A CYNIC is a man who, when he smells flowers, looks around for the coffin.

Ethics for Dramatic Critics

By George Jean Nathan

I

EVER since that night twenty-five years ago when some idiot of a London theatrical manager sought to persuade Bernard Shaw that, when he came to his theatre for reviewing purposes, he ought to have manners enough to lay aside his daytime tweeds and get himself up like a swell-elegant stockbroker, there has persisted between managers and critics a difference of opinion as to the ethics of the business of passing upon plays. The managers' bill of complaint is a long one. It ranges all the way from protesting against a reviewer's impudence in assuming that he can intelligently pass judgment upon a masterpiece like "Abie's Irish Rose" when he very plainly has had a snifter, to protesting indignantly at the same reviewer's leaving the same play in the middle of the second act and making up his mind about it without waiting to see how it comes out. Since lately a certain trace of irascibility has here and there crept into the managers' tone, it may not be amiss for one of the critical gentry to undertake a look into the various writs and replevins.

Perhaps the most common complaint of the managers is directed against the habit of this or that reviewer in deserting his seat before the play is over. The managers argue that the reviewer is in the position of an invited guest, and should conduct himself accordingly. So far, so good. But is it not also true that, if the reviewer is in the position of an invited guest and must conduct himself accordingly, the manager is no less in the position of the inviting host and must similarly conduct *himself* accordingly? If a man invites me to his house

to dinner and then gives me no dinner, can he expect me patiently to hang around until eleven o'clock with my mouth open? He certainly cannot. Nor can a manager who invites me to see a substantial play and then gives me only a cheap piece of fluff. The critic who cannot accurately and finally judge of the quality of a play after the curtain has been up twenty minutes is a rank incompetent. There never lived a dramatist who did not establish or disestablish his right to be listened to respectfully in his first three pages of typewritten copy. If a play's first act reveals a puerile point of view and a paltry skill at dramatic composition there isn't a Chinaman's chance that the second act will contain a single solitary thing to interest any half-way intelligent and cultivated auditor. And for the critic who nonsensically remains for that act to remain also for the act beyond is an unmistakable mark of the critic's complete goosiness. Last month, for example, I was invited by the management to pass critical opinion upon a certain play. The first act of the play was utter drivel without a single redeeming quality, and I left. But, obscene curiosity in a certain direction overtaking me, I retraced my footsteps and stood in the rear promenade to watch those of my colleagues who strangely believed it to be their duty to continue to squat in the hope that the piffle might suddenly and miraculously be converted into resplendent genius. There sat the venerable M. Towse, of the *Evening Post*, in scholarly and profound contemplation of the cheese dish, for all the world as if it were a work of the first importance and as if the fate of nations hung upon the equity of his next day's verdict. A

man of three score and ten, a man of fifty years' service in play reviewing, presenting the pitiable spectacle of soberly wasting his precious time over something that any college boy could hit off at nine o'clock as inimitable and unmitigated trash! And some of the others. There, too, they rested their Pentheselean breeches in an elaborately prolonged professorial appraisal of the trumpery stage traffick. A juicy sight! I put on my hat and went again into the night, ruminating upon the infinite humour of the Divine Maker.

The critic who comes to review a play, the managers further contend, should be in his chair promptly at the time the curtain has been announced to rise, and should be sensitive enough to punctilio to embellish his person with the gauds prescribed by the social code. Why, pray? Although I myself am invariably in my seat at the stipulated time, I know that by this act I am setting a very bad example, and one that works a deal of damage to the theatre as an institution. The theatre is, first and foremost, a place of pleasure. To demand that a pleasure-seeker—and a critic is as much a pleasure-seeker as any other theatregoer; if he is not, he is by way of being a bad critic—to demand that this pleasure-seeker conduct himself precisely after a kind of absolute train schedule is disastrously, at the very outset, to invade his pleasure mood. Pleasure cannot be run by rules. To tell a man that his good time must begin at 8.15 p. m. sharp, and that if it doesn't begin exactly at that minute it can't begin at all, is to treat him as if he were a jail-bird. If a theatregoer wants to come into a theatre at 8:30 or 9 or 9:30 or even 10 o'clock, I can't see that it is anybody's business but his own. One cannot cater to a man's entertainment by asking him to punch a time-clock. The critic, of course, unlike the lay playgoer, has a duty to perform. But duty may often best be performed if it is viewed more as a pleasure than as a job. The police force of New York City became corrupt and inefficient the day that some official thick-neck de-

cided that it would be a great thing to make the men give patrol box rings back to the station houses at specified periods showing that they were where they were supposed to be at the moment they were supposed to be there. The most successful factory in America has a standing rule that the first efficiency expert or "system" impresario who shows up shall promptly be booted in the pantaloons. . . . Show me the critic who is late in arriving for the play of a Hauptmann or someone like him and I'll show you a monkey. Show me one who is on time for the play of a Broadway hack and I'll show you a jackass.

The question of dress is even more nonsensical. The theatre is no more a social institution than the Pennsylvania Station. There is no more sound reason why a man should dress for the theatre if he doesn't wish to than there is for him to dress for a trip to Coney Island. To doll one's self up for a view of one of the innumerable gems of, say, the Hattons, is like appearing at Buckingham Palace in a blue shirt. If the managers hold that it is a question of invitation in the case of a professional critic, and that the critic should therefore pursue the social amenities associated with an invitation, then the obvious reply is that so is a pig-roast a matter of invitation. The circumstance that certain managers hold their pig-roasts at night has nothing whatsoever to do with the case. There are occasions, frequent enough, when one dresses for the theatre, but these occasions are those when the theatre somewhat ostentatiously and not a little ridiculously decides that it will for the evening be a social function. The theatre is always a trifle silly at these times, like a newly rich pork packer who puts on spats and takes up French. It fills its seats with a lot of rich Wall Street Jews (who are driven to regard the theatre and the opera house as social quarters by virtue of barriers set up against them in more private and exclusive guilds), a somewhat lesser number of *Social Register* pushers, and a

few eminent visiting foreign firemen, and then has the impertinence to expect a man with some taste, decorum and sense to stand in front of his pier glass for an hour and make himself similarly gaudy in order to reduce himself to a level with these absurd nincompoops. That I, for example, often so pretty myself up on such occasions is surely no tribute to my good manners and gentlemanliness, and most certainly not to my respect for the profession of dramatic critic, but rather a mark of cheap affectation that seeks, by so uniforming itself, to avoid conspicuousness and, in the avoiding, makes its entrepreneur no better than the swine he affects to spit upon.

When a respectable critic accepts tickets from a manager to review a play, he is under no obligations to the manager other than to review the play as he sees fit to review it, and in the way and after the manner of conduct to which he is peculiarly accustomed. Were it my familiar practise to review plays lying flat upon the floor and attired in the costume of a Big Indian Chief, I don't quite see how any manager could rightfully object to me, provided that I didn't light a pipe and break the fire laws. The manager, true enough, might argue that the floor was no place from which properly to see his play, but that would depend entirely, first, upon the play and, secondly, upon the relative eloquence and persuasiveness of his own and the critic's philosophy in the matter. The ethics of play reviewing, in short, are by no means arbitrary. They may vary with different critics as those critics differ from one another. If Mr. Arthur Bingham Walkley elects to show up in a pearl gray derby hat, a yellow sweater and green knickerbockers and, once seated, feels disposed to review the play in point with his feet resting atop the chair in front of him, I can see no cause for complaint on the part of the manager, save Mr. Walkley's brogans be of such amplitude as to obscure the view of the stage from the person or persons sitting behind him. But if, on the other hand, the third-rate critic of

some second-rate journal were to show up in the same regalia and were to do the same thing, I can see no other course for the manager than to take the fellow by the ear, lead him politely to the rear aisle, and lock him up in the lavatory until the play is over.

The managers are also heard occasionally to grumble over the habit that certain critics have of carrying on conversations while the play is in progress. I have been going to the theatre professionally now for almost twenty years, yet in all that time I have never heard a reviewer, whether a competent or an incompetent one, utter a whisper during the course of a respectable stage exhibit. If what is transpiring on the stage is, on the other hand, negligible, there seems to me to be utterly no reason why a critic above the grade of moron should not be privileged to divert himself in any way he chooses. If he cares to divert himself by conversing with his companion, what business is it of the manager's? He disturbs the persons seated near him, says the manager. That depends. Let us say that the critic in point is Max Beerbohm, or Arthur Symonds, or William Archer, or Alfred Kerr, or our own H. T. Parker. Does the manager—since it is the theory of the thing that we are discussing—seriously mean to contend that persons sitting near-by would not enjoy the conversation a whole lot more than they would the stage piffle? Personally, were I a lay theatregoer, I should very gladly pay out my money even for a play by the late Charles Klein were I to anticipate that, sitting in front of me, I should find two intelligent critics who would keep up an interesting conversation throughout the performance and so pleasantly entertain me.

The managers have many valid complaints against the critics—I could readily give them a number that they themselves haven't thought of—but those that I have cited are far from well-grounded. Let them remember that when they complain against the manners of a critic who leaves a bad play before it is over, they complain

analogously and ridiculously against the established and invariable manners of the King of England. Let them remember that when they complain against the ethics of a critic in carrying on a conversation during a piddling performance, they complain analogously and even more ridiculously against the ethics of the Supreme Court of the United States and the two Houses of Congress. And let them further remember that when they complain against the offense to *bienséance* on the part of critics who do not dress up for eventful gatherings, they complain analogously, and very trenchantly, against the same shortcoming on the part of Jesus Christ.

II

MISS JANE COWL may not be the best Juliet that I have seen, but she is by all odds the most charming. I have experienced many surprises since that day, many years ago, when the late James Gordon Bennett took it suddenly into his peculiar head that I, an otherwise perfectly respectable fellow, was a critic of the drama and put me to informing an anxious world on the merits of Fourteenth Street melodramas. But I have never experienced a greater than in the instance of this particular actress. Year in and year out I have watched her absurdly affected performances in the commercial goods of Broadway, and year in and year out have, in the course of my duty to God, somewhat boorishly set down my opinions on what seemed to me to be her excessively dubious talents. And now she comes along and sorely embarrasses me by jumping out of the hack mush to which she has hitherto devoted herself and into the great tragedy of Shakespeare, and by giving therein a performance that is, save in the instance of the tricky potion scene, immensely persuasive, thoroughly intelligent, and as consistently ingratiating as it ever has been my good fortune to witness. Julia Marlowe, of course, one can never forget—the Julia Marlowe of the days gone by that seemed, at least to eyes younger and more inno-

cent then than they are now, to combine within her, as have few of our actresses since, the talent for romantic tragedy and the genius of romantic beauty. But though Miss Cowl may not be a Marlowe, there are in this Juliet of hers clearer and lovelier echoes of a Marlowe than have rung from any other American actress since Marlowe's time. For again we have a Juliet to the eye as well as to the ear, a Juliet naturally and convincingly, and with beautiful unconsciousness, laughing a great love story on its eventually tragic way. Miss Cowl is not a young woman, but her Juliet is as thoroughly young as a Scott Fitzgerald flapper.

Nothing more clearly brings out the virtues of Miss Cowl's Juliet than a comparison of it with the recent Juliet of Ethel Barrymore. The latter played the role backwards; one could smell the tomb in her very first scene. The moment the curtain went up on her, one could tell that she knew Romeo was going to die and that she was due to pass out on top of him. She shifted the scene throughout from Verona to Vilna. She was as gloomy in her amorous tail-wagging as Stanislavsky's dog. Nor did she for a moment suggest the gorgeous young girl of Italy. Her Juliet was the mother of three lovely daughters, the charming girls who played in "Captain Jinks" and "Cousin Kate" and "Sunday." Her Juliet was the mother, too, of Jane Cowl's. Miss Cowl's Signorina Capulet has all the careless, thoughtless heart that Shakespeare gave to her, and much of the suggestion of physical beauty. It is a Juliet that never for a moment believes that the moon above the balcony is the same moon that will some day set in the neighboring cemetery. It is instinct with youthful indifference and youthful passion, and consigns the rest of life to hell. Only in the potion scene, wherein Miss Cowl decides that it is up to her to prove to the audience that she can "act," does the performance go to pieces. This scene she plays à la Gaspard in "The Chimes of Normandy," with all the stock company pyrotechnics save alone the green

light. But otherwise her Juliet is completely admirable. And it surely deserves a more likely Romeo than that of Rollo Peters. Peters' Romeo, while superior to that of McKay Morris, is little more than a Yale boy with a crush on a "Follies" girl.

III

STANDING in the hind aisle of the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre four seasons ago during the performance of a dreary British comedy called "Betty at Bay" or something of the sort—I recall only that Miss Doris Rankin played the lead in it—Arthur Hopkins observed that each such successive London comedy of recent years seemed to be worse than the one that preceded it. Why they kept on importing these things, he said he could not, for the life of him, understand. I agreed with him fully, and I agree with him even more fully still now that I have seen his own production of the imported Alfred Sutro's "Laughing Lady." The play is a long outmoded drawing-room comedy of the species wherein divers K. C.'s, K. B. C.'s and Ladys This and That become vastly exercised over a mild antecedent indiscretion on the part of the star actress, which works its strainfully epigrammatic way up to Act III with the K. C.'s and K. B. C.'s taking the side of the star actress, and which brings down the final curtain on the star actress' dismissal of her lover and return to her lout of a husband with the wistful declaration that there is something more important in life, after all, than love. Such a play, save it be contrived out of a brilliantly witty, sharply observant and keenly sympathetic head, is doomed to be piffle piffissimo, and that, save for a brief deft piece of writing in the middle of the second act and a tenderly composed scene in the third, is just what Sutro's play is. One no more expects Hopkins to sponsor such stuff—particularly in view of his seriously announced Longacre Theatre repertoire plan embracing the best in classic and modern dramatic literature—than one expects

the Minsky Brothers to sponsor a symphony orchestra.

IV

TRANSLATING freely from Ibsen's "Posthumous Papers," we encounter something like the following:

"'Peer Gynt' is not meant for the theatre. Anyone who would put it on is a fool; anyone who would go to see it is a *damned* fool."

I have the honour to announce myself a member of the Order of the Second Class. I have seen "Peer Gynt" played not once, but *twice*—both times in Europe, as I never saw Mansfield's American production. But I now unbuckle my sash, remove my medals, and hand in my resignation. I decline to accept the Theatre Guild's courteous invitation to see it again. I have, save in the instance of two widely separated dramatic episodes, each of less than ten minutes' duration, been bored to death with it in its theatrical vestments, just as have all of my colleagues who are fortunate in being much more lovable and graceful liars than I am. Ibsen, now that I am older than I used to be, was, I conclude, right. "Peer Gynt," for all its flashes of reading sensitiveness and beauty, possesses no more valid theatrical design than a George M. Cohan libretto possesses reading design. The attempt to fit it into the theatre may be productive of certain attractive experiments in novel scenic embellishment and certain variably successful histrionic diagnoses, but these at best are externals battling vainly and with not a little pathetic futility against the dramatically nebulous and ungraspable manuscript. Find me a producer bent upon putting on "Peer Gynt" and I display for your edification a man who is ready, with easily penetrable artistic affectation, to sacrifice his medium and all that it truthfully and soundly stands for to the end that he himself may profit by a measure of extrinsic and spurious glory. The Theatre Guild, worthy and excellent organization as it is, seems to me lately to be posturing itself in the

light of an intellectual and artistic pusher. There is something suspect in certain of its exhibits. Are thorough honesty and thorough integrity of purpose in such of its offerings as, for example, Claudel's "Tidings Brought to Mary" and this present "Peer Gynt"? I presume to be afflicted with an impolite but none the less unmistakable doubt.

V

WHEN, the morning after the opening of a play, I pick up the newspapers and read what certain of my confrères have to say about it, I often conclude that either I am crazy or the periodicals that pay me for writing about the theatre are crazier still. Viewing an amalgam of banal point of view, cheap thinking and defective dramatic and writing skill and then reading the next morning that what one has heard and seen constitutes a very excellent play blessed with fresh point of view, shrewd thinking and a high degree of dramatic and writing skill is not strictly conducive to one's erstwhile equanimity and self-assurance. Surely, one says to one's self, I cannot be the only one in the whole regiment who is in step; surely there must be something wrong with me to differ so violently with these estimable gents; surely my judgment must be acquiring holes; maybe—and here one sobs lustily and wipes away a tear that would do justice to a Fifth Avenue undertaker—maybe I am getting dotty. Such emotions were once again mine after seeing Rachel Crothers' latest play, "Mary the Third," and subsequently reading my newspaper friends' enthusiastic tributes to its profound worth and beauty. All that I can say is this: if the play in question is what my colleagues say it is, then I am ready for the strait-jacket and should no longer be allowed at large.

VI

SUCH is the nature of our criticism that had the play called "Ice Bound" been written by a recognized first-rate

dramatist it would have been dubbed a clearly deficient piece of work where, written by Owen Davis, it has been hailed instead as a notable achievement. This critical charity that so generously bestows its alms of praise upon worthy intent rather than upon actual accomplishment, where the intent is that of some hitherto purely commercial and tawdry craftsman, strikes off what is perhaps the most common failing of criticism as it is promiscuously practised in the Republic. Believing, correctly enough, that the duty of criticism is to encourage fine purpose and honest endeavour, it puts the cart before the horse by confusing such purpose and endeavour on the part of one artistically sensitive enough to execute them—at least to a degree—with the same purpose and endeavour on the part of one who, for all his praiseworthy aspiration, is condemned by a stark and ineradicable artistic inadequacy to an unrealizable dream. It is this critical charity that, while essentially destructive, yet passes current for constructive criticism.

In the case of Mr. Davis, the thing has gone to absurd lengths. Simply because this playwright has devoted the years of his life to cheap Fourteenth Street melodramas and Broadway yokel-yankers and then, honestly ashamed of himself in his late fifties, essays overnight to be a Eugene O'Neill—a metamorphosis as easy of negotiation as a Sing Sing prisoner's effort to escape by pretending that he is a zebra—because of this grotesque, if commendatory, essay our critics throw their hats into the air for all the world as if the business of soundly appreciative criticism were less with grandeur than with delusions of grandeur. And thus it has come about that the play which Mr. Davis calls "Ice Bound" has been greeted with encomiums ranging all the way from the customary daily newspaper roman candles and flower-pots to this magnificently overwhelming set-piece in the theatrical weekly *Variety*: "'Ice Bound' is as good as most of Ibsen's plays and better than any of Hauptmann's—it is minus the fad for the

foreign that invests these transplanted documents with an artificial, specious and frequently fallacious importance. That Owen Davis is a serious thinker, a student of the best in drama and a laureate of moods and conditions of his time, cannot be denied."

It is true enough that "Ice Bound" is the best play that the author of "Bertha the Sewing Machine Girl," "Nellie the Beautiful Cloak Model," "Sinners," "Forever After," "Dreams for Sale" and "The Detour" has written, but in the same æsthetic way and in the same comparative critical sense is a certain book (whatever its title may be) doubtless the best that Robert W. Chambers, author of "The Common Law," "Police!!!" "The Restless Sex," "In Secret," "The Crimson Tide," etc., has written. Yet sound quality is quite another matter; it has nothing whatsoever to do with comparative worth. In Mr. Davis' case, what happened in the matter of "The Detour" has now happened again in the instance of "Ice Bound." Comparisons, instead of being odious, here become merely sweet and foolish. Because these two plays are not deliberately cheap, as the other of Mr. Davis' plays have been, the avoidance of cheapness has been confounded with the presence of merit. That merit, alas, is not there. We have an heroic striving for integrity; we have a painstaking sweat for quality; but the ghosts of compromise and of equivocation and of hokum that in the life have walked the earth with Mr. Davis these thirty years and more are ever at his elbow with their thumbs posed vexatiously at the tips of their noses. Such is the penalty of the Malvolio who would a Hamlet be; such the tragedy of a writer who, perhaps originally not without potential talent, has walked the

streets of dramatic letters for so long that, when he would reform, finds that he has nothing left to reform with. "Ice Bound" aims at the stars, and breaks a clay pipe. The reward is the five-cent cigar of journalistic eulogy.

VII

As brilliant a specimen of direction as the modern theatre has witnessed is that of Stanislavsky in the instance of Gorki's "The Lower Depths." Forgetting the matter of stage lighting which, in this production as in several of the others of the Moscow organization, is of a decidedly crude nature, one seldom sees the values of a dramatic manuscript so shrewdly and vitally realized as they have been realized in the case of the play in point. Tolerably familiar with the manuscript from numerous readings of it and from an even greater number of theatrical attendances upon it both in this country and abroad, the Stanislavsky handling of it yet amazes and enchants one with its ferreting out of details that one was not in the least conscious of and that had completely eluded one's vainglorious nose for authentic theatrical and dramatic effect. There seems to be not a single small thing that the Russian director has overlooked in his patient work of dredging out of and liberating from this play its every last bit of power, its every last drop of juice. The job is dazzling in its completeness. It comes, unless I am very sorely mistaken, as near to being an example of a perfectly staged manuscript as the world theatre has known. The direction, the acting, the exposition of the script are superb. But the lighting! In this department Stanislavsky is a child. Belasco and Hopkins would be ashamed to countenance even for a moment lighting ten times as good.



Americanism: Exterior View

By H. L. Mencken

I

IT is highly improbable that W. T. Colyer's "Americanism: a World Menace" (Labor Pub. Co.) will get anything approaching honest notice from the critical organs of the Republic, for the author is apparently a member of the English Labor Party, and as such he must be anathema to every 100% Americano. True enough, the Ku Klux principle of criticism enunciated so naively by Prof. Dr. Sherman cannot be applied to him without stretching a point, for he is an Englishman, and he himself has said it, but nevertheless the chances are that his right as an Anglo-Saxon to the obeisance of the Yankee colonial will be more than offset by his liability as a Radical to the bump of the patriotic hoof. Being neither Englishman nor Radical, and certainly neither Yankee colonial nor Yankee patriot, I may, perhaps, estimate his treatise with something resembling impartiality. That study leads me to regret that it will get so few frank and competent reviews, for it is not only a book that shows a great deal of incisive observation and profitable reflection, but also one that is very gracefully written. Try to think of an American labor leader writing good English, or even ordinarily intelligible bad English! The effort takes one into mysticism. Is William Z. Foster an exception? Then don't forget that Dr. Foster has been solemnly repudiated by the Sacred College of American labor, and that in most American states the circulation of his compositions is forbidden by law, always with the consent

of the local Federation. Old Gompers is a far better specimen of the normal American labor leader. He can neither think nor write. His ideas, in the main, are simply dull parodies of those of Judge Gary, and his style is no more than an enfeebled copy of that of the Hon. W. G. Harding. But this Mr. Colyer, as I say, wields a slippery and ingratiating stylus. His sentences trip along like gazelles. He knows how to be eloquent without being maudlin. And under the agreeable murmur of his phrases there is some hard thinking, and most of it is extremely apposite and accurate.

The argument of the learned gentleman's book need not detain us, for it is addressed primarily to his fellow Englishmen, and, as he himself says, the emergency they face has no parallel on this side of the ocean. That emergency has been brought upon them by the rise of British labor, which now begins to challenge the capitalistic system in its very citadel, the House of Commons, and may be strong enough in a few years to drag it into a struggle to the death. Mr. Colyer is by no means convinced that labor will win in this combat; on the contrary, he seems to think that the chances of the two contestants are about even, and that the struggle will be so close and so bitter that the victor will be tempted to go to extreme lengths to safeguard the fruits of victory. If labor wins there will be a strong tendency to follow Russia into something roughly describable as communism; if capitalism wins there will be a like tendency to follow the United States into what Mr. Colyer calls

Americanism, *i. e.*, into a form of super-capitalism which seeks to put down all opposition, and even all criticism, by force. It is his endeavor in his book to prove to his compatriots that this Americanism is a great deal worse than communism—that it is more tyrannical, more cruel, more costly, more dishonest. To this end he undertakes to describe realistically the sort of government under which the people of the United States live today, and, in particular, to show by chapter and verse how it has gradually invaded and destroyed their theoretical liberties, so that they have eventually come to a kind of unanimous serfdom, not only economically and politically, but also in religion, in *mores*, and even in ideas.

II

It seems to me that this business is carried off by the author with quite unusual perspicacity and perspicuity, and that his ensuing analysis of the ideas lying at the bottom of the American system is vastly more sound than that of any American performer upon the same subject. In at least two directions he breaks new ground. On the one hand he shows clearly how patriotism in the United States has been brought to a degree of malignant virulence unmatched in any other civilized country, and how it has sucked even religion into its orbit, so that Christianity, American model, has gone down to such levels that it is now little more than a system of organized hatreds. And on the other hand he sees the plain fact, so curiously shut off from Liberal eyes, that capitalism in the United States has now reached such a height of self-defensive efficiency that any effective challenge of it, save by the sole device of physical force, *i. e.*, armed rebellion, has become quite hopeless. This last, it appears, the Liberals simply cannot bring themselves to believe. They are forever whistling up rain spouts—forever arranging pleasant excursions for men who are safely locked up in jail. Never a day passes that they do not come for-

ward with some new device for liberating the great masses of the plain people, and never a day passes that new proofs are not forthcoming of their incurable imbecility. Capital is so little perturbed by their childish bustling that, as everyone knows, it actually finances them. And why? Simply because it knows how easy it is to fool them. Will the historians of the future believe that it actually fooled them about the late war? The thing seems incredible, but it nevertheless came to pass. What is more, capitalism will fool them again when the time comes for the next war. And meanwhile it will have its gentle jokes with them in other directions—and they will continue to believe, following their master mind, Dr. Lippmann, that the way to save the proletariat is to “educate” it, *i. e.*, to burst its gullet with even worse doses of official balderdash than are forced down today.

I hope I need not assure the Post-office Department that I am no partisan of the communist revolution that Dr. Colyer seems to favor. On the contrary, I am unfeignedly glad that it is further off in the United States than anywhere else on earth; that, in brief, is why I continue to honor the Republic with my presence, despite the frequent suggestions that I get out and stay out. I live, like most other literary men, by preying upon the producers of the nation. While they are busily engaged 800 feet under the surface of the globe, loosing coal with a pick, or recreating themselves on cold and sleety nights walking the tops of freight trains, I am at ease in a comfortable room, reading immoral books or drinking contraband alcohol. This is because I share, to a modest extent, in the nation’s accumulation of capital, the fruit of exploitation at home and swindling abroad, and because I am, to that extent at least, a member of the capitalistic system and a colleague of Dr. Rockefeller and Judge Gary. It seems to me to be more intelligent to live thus, if it be feasible, than to live by honest labor. Moreover, it seems to me to be far safer. If I were a workingman the only thing that would

stand between me and the ever-present risk of losing my job and starving to death would be the diligence and skill of a few labor leaders, all of whom are stupid and most of whom are corrupt. As it is, my security is protected, not only by the vastly greater skill and diligence of Judge Gary and his friends, but also by their firm control of the whole governmental process in the United States—and in particular by the devices whereby they are able, in case of attack from below, to break down the strength of the proletariat by putting one-half of it to shooting the other half. Thus I can sleep without dreaming of barricades and revolutions. I am a bachelor, and the insurance actuaries tell me that my expectation of life is less than 25 years, even assuming that I go to bed every night at 10 o'clock and give up tobacco. The capitalistic system will last in the Republic far longer than 25 years—and I have no reason to bother about what happens in the remote times beyond, when I shall be in Heaven.

It is Mr. Colyer's effort to show that this security of the capitalistic system is more marked in the United States than anywhere else—that it is founded upon broader foundations and safeguarded by a more adept and ingenious manipulation of popular imbecilities. Nowhere else in the world, to my knowledge, is there such elaborate machinery for inoculating the proletariat with safe ideas. Every agency of public information, from the press to the pulpit and from the chautauqua to the legislature, is rigidly controlled, and every agency of counter-propaganda is under a legal ban. The results are visible in two familiar phenomena of the past few years: the complete collapse of organized radicalism, and even of organized orthodox Socialism, in the nation, and the successful organization of such societies as the American Legion and the Ku Klux Klan into engines of repression. It is impossible to imagine English soldiers or German soldiers or even French soldiers converting themselves into armed bands for putting

down all criticism of the capitalistic system. They are too keenly aware that, in the late war, their sufferings worked its benefit—that it fortified itself while they were languishing in the trenches. But in America, partly because very few American soldiers (and certainly not many members of the American Legion) got to the trenches, but partly because Americans have a special vulnerability to official propaganda and a special talent for conformity, it has been quite easy to turn the late conscripts into an army of capitalistic mercenaries, ready at all times to inflict barbarous punishment upon every effective critic of the capitalistic system.

Mr. Colyer illuminates this business with much acumen, and is full of instructive instances. He is even more persuasive when he discusses the degradation of religion in the United States. Theoretically, it is one of the functions of a Christian church to stand between oppressed and oppressor, slave and master, and now and then, as everyone knows, some bold ecclesiastic ventures to perform that function among us. But the penalty that falls upon him is always condign and merciless, and so the great majority of men of God are dissuaded from imitating him, even supposing them to be so moved by the Holy Spirit. In the main, as Mr. Colyer shows, Christianity in the United States, and especially the Protestant Christianity that is supported by capitalism, is inconceivably timorous, knavish and degraded. In place of the divine appointment of the Pope to keep the conscience of Christendom most American Protestants believe in the divine appointment of the Republic, which is to say, of its appointed bosses and guardians. Thus their religion becomes a snuffling sort of patriotism, and quite as nonsensical as the ordinary variety. For such vermin as Methodists and Baptists to descend to such flummery is, of course, to be expected, for their theology is frankly designed for half-wits, but, as Mr. Colyer shows, many of the sects of greater intellectual pretension are but little better. He men-

tions specifically the Unitarians, whose official organ, the *Christian Register*, has been so responsive to official propaganda of late that even the Liberals have called it to book. He might have added the Christian Scientists, whose newspaper, during the late war, rivaled the *New York Tribune* in patriotic tall talk. But here, perhaps, other elements entered into the matter, for example, Anglomania. The Christian Scientists, in large part, are ex-Methodists, ex-Baptists and ex-Jews who are ambitious for social position, and that aspiration is always furthered in America by loudly advocating the current cause of the Motherland. They are, beside, naturally opposed to anything which menaces their economic security. . . .

I sketch the main points of Mr. Colyer's treatise lightly. It is a book that deserves to be read carefully. The author, though a labor leader, sets forth opinions that are undoubtedly shared by large numbers of Englishmen, including many of the most intelligent. The English do not admire the American system. They have a capitalistic system of their own, but it is ameliorated by many things. One of them is the persistence, despite the rise of men of mere money, of an ancient aristocracy of the soil, with definite concepts of its public responsibility and of what is due its historical traditions. Another is the English respect for personal liberty. Perhaps one reason why the folks of the island admire us so little is that they have a congenital contempt for all goose-stepping. Mr. Colyer's book will confirm them in that contempt.

III

Two versions of the Coué gospel seem to be in circulation in the Republic. There is, first, a pamphlet of 128 pages translated by some unknown hand and "carefully compared with the original French and prepared for the press" by one Archibald Stark Van Orden, who served democracy and human freedom as a Y. M. C. A. secretary in

France; it sells for 50 cents (*Malkan*). There is, secondly, a pamphlet of 95 pages translated by another unknown hand and put out without any such editing; it sells for \$1 (*American Library Service*). Both are solemnly copyrighted; I don't know which, if either, is authorized by the Master himself. But their contents, barring some unimportant rearrangements, are identical, and so I commend the former to seekers after sweetness and light. One gets two copies of it for a dollar instead of only one, and one may thus give away the second, and help spread the enlightenment. There will be no difficulty about unloading it. All over this grand and puissant nation there are souls who pant for Coué as a policeman pants for his hourly dram of synthetic gin. The word has gone forth to the farthest places that a new brand of peruna is on tap, a new cure for all the sorrows of the world. Who wants Coué? Who needs Coué? Whoever was cured by psychoanalysis last year, and by the New Thought the year before, and by osteopathy the year before that, and by Christian Science the year before that. In brief, whoever has a strange sinking in the latitude of the equator and a yearning all over—whoever is a bit uneasy inside, but not quite uneasy enough to go to bed and send for a doctor and a nurse.

Let us get to the heart of the magic at once. Here is Couéism as stated by the Master himself, translated by an unknown hand, and "carefully compared with the original French and prepared for the press" by Friar Van Orden:

Suppose that we place on the floor a plank 30 feet long and 10 inches wide. It is evident that everyone would be able to walk along that plank from one end to the other without stepping off. Now change the conditions of the experiment, and suppose that this plank is placed, let us say, as high as the towers of a cathedral; where then is the person capable of walking only a single foot along that narrow path made by the board? Would you who read this be the one? Doubtless *no*. You wouldn't take two steps before you began to tremble and *in spite of all the efforts of your will-power* you would certainly tumble to the

ground. Why is it that you do not fall when the plank is on the ground? And how is it that you do fall when it is raised to any great height? Simply because in the first case you *imagine that it is easy* to walk to the end of that plank, while in the second case you *imagine that it is impossible*.

Here, brilliantly in brief, is the essence of the New Thought, Christian Science, Couéism and all the rest of that garbage, and an admirable example of the underlying logic. Would it be possible to think of anything more idiotic than this reasoning? Give it your best attention for a moment: it is difficult and hazardous to walk across a narrow plank "as high as the towers of a cathedral," not because the plank is likely to sag and sway, not because the conflict of focal planes is flustering and dizzying, not because the obvious dangers of the slightest misstep are appalling, but simply and solely because you *imagine that it is impossible!* Once you get rid of this evil imagining—in Christian Science slang, once you put away Mortal Error; in New Thought slang, once you get into tune with the Infinite—then the business becomes instantly safe and easy! The plank will not sag and bounce under you. The abyss beneath you will not make your eyes pop. And if you step on a nail and are thrown you will not come down ker-thump into the cathedral yard, to the menace and surprise of the canons and chapter. . . . Go back and read the argument again: it is the purest attar of the Coué doctrine. And then try to imagine the mental state of persons who listen to such puerile balderdash gravely, and go away convinced that there is logic in it, and sense. . . .

On the vast prosperity of Couéism, the New Thought, Mental Mastery, Yogiism, Christian Science and other such varieties of necromancy in the United States I have often speculated sadly, but seldom to much profit. Once I hazarded the guess that their astounding spread was due largely to the increasing complexity of scientific pathology and therapeutics—to the fact that the most elementary facts of the two

sciences are now unintelligible to all save a very small minority of laymen. To understand even the *problem* of immunity, without going into the various efforts to solve it, presupposes a pretty wide acquaintance with chemistry, physics and bacteriology—an acquaintance a great deal wider, in fact, than that of the average practising physician, particularly in such backward communities as Boston and Los Angeles, where Christian Science and the related imbecilities most luxuriantly flourish. The beleaguered patient, his liver and lights beset by strange malaises and his mind full of vague fears, is unable to understand his doctor—if, indeed, his doctor is able to understand himself. So he turns first to osteopathy and chiropractic, which make the thing much simpler, and when the practitioners of those frauds have failed to cure him, to the agents of Coué, Ma Eddy and company, who make it simpler still. Describe, say, Bright's disease in scientific terms: it will take you an hour, and when you are done you will have to spend a couple of weeks defining the words you have used. But put the thing into terms of the New Thought, and it is all over in two minutes. Bright's disease, according to the New Thought, is simply a symptom of insalubrious thoughts—maybe lewd and criminal, but possibly only idle. *Think* right, and you are cured. . . . But don't neglect to leave a love offering for the fair practitioner. She is saving up to go to Los Angeles next autumn, to attend the Ecumenical Conference of Swamis and take a look at Charlie's new girl. Or perhaps the Mother Church is raising a fund to erect a gold-plated equestrian statue to the Rev. Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, namesake and tutor of another Phineas, also of New England.

But this theory that medicine is chasing away its customers by growing too scientific leaves me unsatisfied, despite its general plausibility, for certainly there is nothing complex about a sprained ankle, and yet there are thousands of Americans who, when they

suffer one, go to some chanter of magic formulae to have it treated, greatly to the ensuing joy and profit of the surgeons. (I am told that certain advanced Christian Science ladies have even perfected a formula for birth control, God save us all!) The simple truth is that, in many superficially simple situations, the scientific explanation is not only hopelessly complex and unintelligible, but probably quite as nonsensical at bottom as the New Thought explanation. These are the borderland cases, the undiagnosed cases, the characteristic Christian Science, psychoanalysis and Coué cases. One of the things that scientific pathology has begun to teach us is that most human diseases, even those that appear to be simplest and most transparent, are actually enormously complex and mysterious. Another thing that it will no doubt teach us before long is that the number of definite diseases has been much underestimated in the past—that man is subject to many more ills than he ever suspected in more innocent and ignorant ages—above all, that the number is constantly increasing. I believe this last firmly. Man is gradually delivering himself from some of the worst plagues of the past, but the very social organization which enables him to do so also corrodes his organism and corrupts his natural power of resistance, and so exposes him to new attacks. The chances are, indeed, that some of the vague malaises which now afflict human beings, particularly in the big cities and among the leisured classes—the very folks who, after vain sufferings at the hands of medical men, turn to Coué and other such quacks for relief—are the preliminary scaffoldings, so to speak, of plagues of the future. What is now treated by reading “Science and Health,” massaging the solar plexus, and murmuring “Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better,” may eventually be a matter for quarantine and pest-house.

Perhaps this concept of the slow evolution of disease is new. If so, I present it to the faculty with my compli-

ments. There are, of course, maladies that may be called native to the human organism; no doubt even our anthropoid ancestors suffered from them, as even cannibals, labor leaders and Y. M. C. A. secretaries suffer from them today. But there are also maladies that are obviously the end products of long years in unfavorable environments and of continued violations of the most elementary principles of personal hygiene. I pass over the occupational diseases, and point to hay-fever, alcoholic gastritis and the various phobias that psychoanalysts struggle with. There must be many more such disorders than pathologists commonly suspect, and some of them must be in such early stages of development that it is difficult to identify them. Perhaps they account for many of the vague, indescribable discomforts that now torture the customers of Coué and his brethren—discomforts which scientific pathology is too apt to dismiss as imaginary, simply because it cannot demonstrate them on the slide. Later on they may become so well marked that their reality will be too patent to be denied, and eventually they may take on the proportions of serious plagues. Run a Congressman through a finely-set meat-slicing machine and examine his successive sections under the microscope, and you will find that he is swarming with micro-organisms. Some of them are readily recognizable as the causative agents of definite diseases, but others seem to have no function whatever: they are present in swarms, but apparently do no harm. This seeming may be only seeming. They may be, in fact, organisms that are just learning their business—apprentices in the hereditary profession of their race. At present the worst they can accomplish is to make the Congressman feel uneasy and unhappy—and the best his doctor can think of is to advise him to cut down his cigars, chew his food at least two minutes before swallowing it, and stop patronizing the House Building bootleggers. But in the course of a few more centuries of the hot, sinful,

artificial life of Washington, they may suddenly take on the high skill and potency of the *spirochæte pallida*, and so begin to slay their millions. The notion that man will ever conquer *all* diseases, even all bacterial diseases, is one too absurd to be entertained. Hell must be peopled, and doctors must get their living. God will reward them for their diligence by safeguarding their jobs. Undertakers will be rich so long as man is vile.

At the moment, as I say, the victims of these amateurish and incompetent bacilli turn to Couéism, the New Thought, deep breathing, Fletcherism, osteopathy, chiropractic, Christian Science and the rest of the current quackeries. It is easy to laugh at them, but let us not forget that their sufferings, while not described, perhaps, by Osler, are nevertheless very real and very unpleasant. If, in despair of getting any relief from the official barber-surgeons, uroscopists and compounders of vaccines, they sacrifice their intellectual integrity by chanting that "God is Love" or that every day, in every way, they are getting better and better, then let us at least throw over their treason to decency the same mantle of charity that we throw over the act of the poor working-girl who, in despair of making a living at honest toil, sacrifices her chastity to the first man willing to marry her.

IV

Brief Notices

CONFESSIONS OF A CONFIDENCE MAN, edited by Edward H. Smith (*Scientific American Press*)—A useful text-book for ambitious college graduates. Detailed descriptions of a multitude of ingenious and effective swindles by an expert. The book is extremely amusing.

THE MORALS OF THE MOVIE, by Ellis P. Oberholtzer (*Penn*)—The case for censorship by the most eminent American censor. A farrago of snuffing, pecksniffian nonsense. The vaporings of a bombastic vacuum with a messianic delusion.

RAILROAD MELONS, RATES AND WAGES, by Charles Edward Russell (*Kerr*)—A compendium of the swindles perpetrated upon the American booboisie by the Goulds, Vanderbilts, Morgans and other such magnificoes. But don't let it alarm you. Keep

your railroad bonds. The boobs are ready for many more doses of the same.

THE SECOND EMPIRE, by Philip Guedalla (*Putnam*)—A biography of Napoleon III in the manner of Strachey's "Queen Victoria," but not so good. The book is being massively praised by the band of log-rollers to which the author apparently belongs. It has some sound merit, but there is too much highly self-conscious cleverness in it.

NONSENSORSHIP, by various hands (*Putnam*)—A collection of flings, some very amusing and some very labored, at Comstockery. Each is accompanied by an excellent caricature of the author by Ralph Barton.

THE OUTLINE OF H. G. WELLS, by Sidney Dark (*Parson*)—An exhaustive and well-considered exposition of the Wellsian system. Mr. Dark believes, and I agree with him thoroughly, that "The History of Mr. Polly" is Wells' best book.

EMINENT EUROPEANS, by Eugene S. Bagger (*Putnam*)—Amusing, but by no means judicious character sketches of various little known figures in the current *haut politique* of Europe, among them, Masaryk, Benes, Bratiano, Horthy and Karolyi. Mr. Bagger, in truth, is almost incredibly prejudiced. To his eyes, the two megalomaniacal ex-professors, Benes and Masaryk, whose joint Metternich complex now rocks Bohemia toward ruin, are veritable patterns of altruistic statecraft. But when this bias is allowed for, his pages are always entertaining and often instructive.

KNUT HAMSUN, by Hanna Astrup Larsen (*Knopf*)—A workmanlike account of the celebrated Norwegian, a great deal less ecstatic than such treatises usually are.

WORLD HISTORY, 1815-1920, by Eduard Fueter, translated by Sidney Bradshaw Fay (*Harcourt*)—An erudite work by a pro-French Swiss. The chapters on the late war are based on the researches of Lord Northcliffe, Prof. Hazen of Columbia, the editor of the *Providence Journal*, and the Creel Press Bureau.

ATOLLS OF THE SUN, by Frederick O'Brien (*Century*)—A third revamping of "White Shadows in the South Seas," this time dealing with the Paumotu group of islands. The usual fetching pictures of yellow gals in the altogether.

OLD MOROCCO AND THE FORBIDDEN ATLAS, by C. E. Andrews (*Doran*)—The conventional travel book, dully written and with uninteresting pictures.

THE WHITE HEART OF MOJAVE, by Edna Brush Perkins (*Liveright*)—Another.

THE LIFE OF WILLIAM HAZLITT, by P. P. Howe (*Doran*)—A literary biography so flabby and uninspired that reading it becomes a downright torture.

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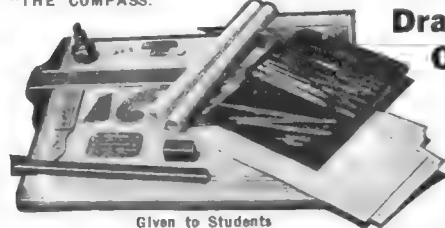
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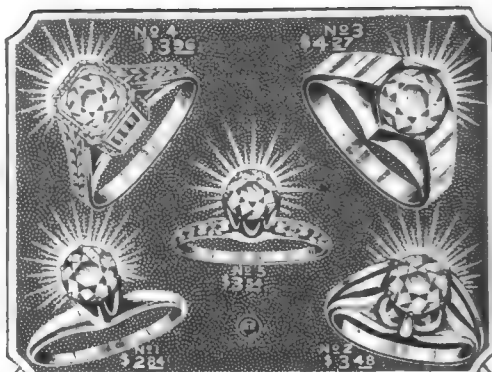
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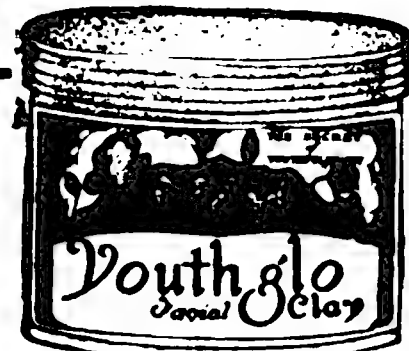
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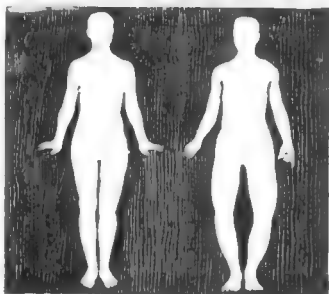


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April

Finding "The Fountain of Youth"

Along-Sought Secret, Vital to Happiness, Has Been Discovered.

By H. M. Stunz

*Alas! that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!*

—OMAR KHAYYAM.

A SECRET vital to human happiness has been discovered. An ancient problem which, sooner or later, affects the welfare of virtually every man and woman, has been solved. As this problem undoubtedly will come to you eventually, I urge you to read this article carefully. It may give you information of a value beyond all price.

This newly-revealed secret is not a new "philosophy" of financial success. It has to do with something of far greater moment to the individual—success and happiness in love and marriage—and there is nothing theoretical, imaginative or fantastic about it, because it comes from the coldly exact realms of science and its value has been proved. It "works." And because it does work—surely, speedily and most delightfully—it is one of the most important discoveries made in many years. Thousands already bless it for having rescued them from lives of disappointment and misery.

The peculiar value of this discovery is that it removes physical handicaps which, in the past, have been considered inevitable and irremediable. I refer to the loss of youthful animation and a waning of the vital forces. These difficulties have caused untold unhappiness—failures, shattered romances, mysterious divorces. True happiness does not depend on wealth, position or fame. Primarily, it is a matter of health. Not



the inefficient "half-alive" condition which ordinarily passes as "health," but the abundant, magnetic vitality of superb manhood and womanhood.

Unfortunately, this kind of health is rare. Our civilization rapidly depletes the organism and, in a physical sense, old age comes on when life should be at its prime. But this is not a tragedy of our era alone. Ages ago a Persian poet voiced humanity's immemorial complaint that "spring should vanish with the rose" and the song of youth too soon come to an end. And for centuries before Omar Khayyam wrote his immortal verses, science had searched—and in the centuries that have passed since then has continued to search—without halt, for the fabled "fountain of youth," an infallible method of renewing energy lost or depleted by disease, overwork, worry, excesses or advancing age.

Now the long search has been rewarded. A "fountain of youth" has been found! Science announces unconditionally that youthful vigor can be restored quickly and safely. Lives clouded by weakness can be illuminated by the sunlight of health and joy. Old age, in a sense, can be kept at bay and youth made more glorious than ever. And the discovery which makes these amazing results possible is something any man or woman, young or old, can easily use in the privacy of the home.

The discovery had its origin in famous European laboratories. Brought to America, it was developed into a product that has given most remarkable results in thousands of cases, many of which had defied all other treatments. In scientific circles the discovery has been known and used for several years and has caused unbounded amazement by its quick, harmless, gratifying action. Now, in convenient tablet form, under the name of Korex compound, it is available to the general public.

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If a Snake Had Brains

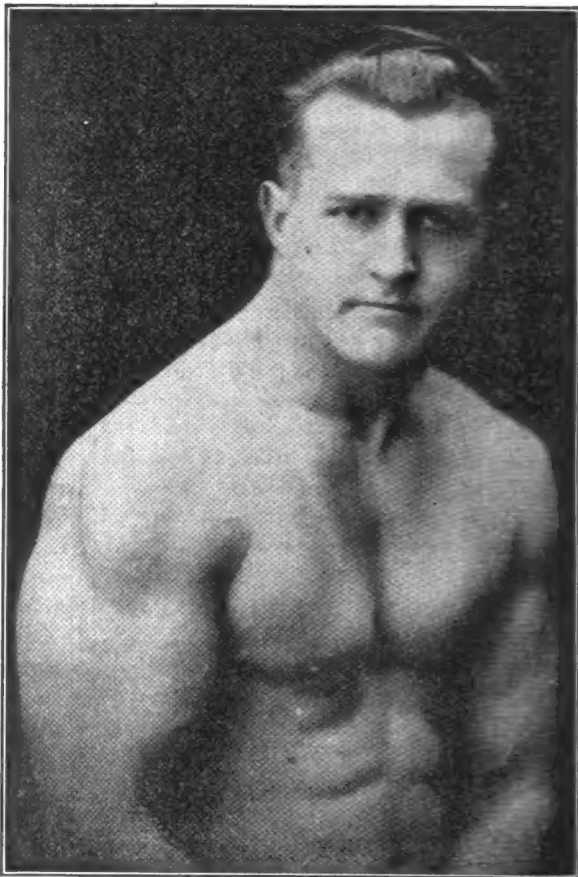
—he would still be a snake. With his present body he would be forced to continue crawling on his belly. So he would be no better off.

Of What Use Is Your Brain?

A snake is the lowest and meanest of animal life, while mankind is the highest. Do you make use of your advantages? Your brain is used to direct your body. If you don't keep the body in fit condition to do its work, you are doomed to failure. How are you using this wonderful structure? Do you neglect it or improve it?

EXAMINE YOURSELF

A healthy body is a strong, robust one. Do you arise in the morning full of pep and ambition to get started on the day's work? Do you have the deep, full chest, the big, mighty arms and the broad back of a **REAL HE MAN**? Do you have the spring to your step and the bright flash to your eye that mean you are bubbling over with vitality? If not, you are slipping backward. You are not a real man and you cannot hope for the admiration or respect of others. *Awake!* Get hold of yourself and make yourself **THE MAN YOU WERE MEANT TO BE.**



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Will you turn your body over to me for just 90 days? That's all it takes—and I guarantee to give you a physique to be really proud of. Understand, I don't promise this—I guarantee it. In 30 days I will increase your arm one full inch, and your chest two inches in the same length of time. And then, just watch 'em grow. From then on you will feel the pep in your old backbone. You will start doing things that you never thought possible. You will amaze yourself and friends as well. Do you crave this new life—these new joys—this abounding health and strength? If you do

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Two cakes of soap! Both to be used at each washing, one right after the other. The Clinic soap cleanses the pores antiseptically, frees them of all impurities that accumulate deep down where ordinary toilet soaps never reach.

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So, the Clinic soap is followed by the Tonic soap, which stimulates the growth of fresh new skin by nourishing the underlying tissues, and also tones the skin and protects it equally well from the rigors of winter and the heat of summer.

When you have washed with both soaps you have given yourself a perfect beauty treatment. You have cleansed your pores antiseptically and fed your skin with EVERY element it needs to be healthy.

And the wonder of it all is that it doesn't take a moment longer to wash with both cakes than it does to wash twice with one cake of ordinary soap.

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TWIN SOAPS

Your merchant sells these soaps, 2 in a package for 25 cents. If he doesn't, send us stamps and his name, and we will send it to you direct. You can afford to use them every day. You will want to, after the first washing, because they will help you.

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